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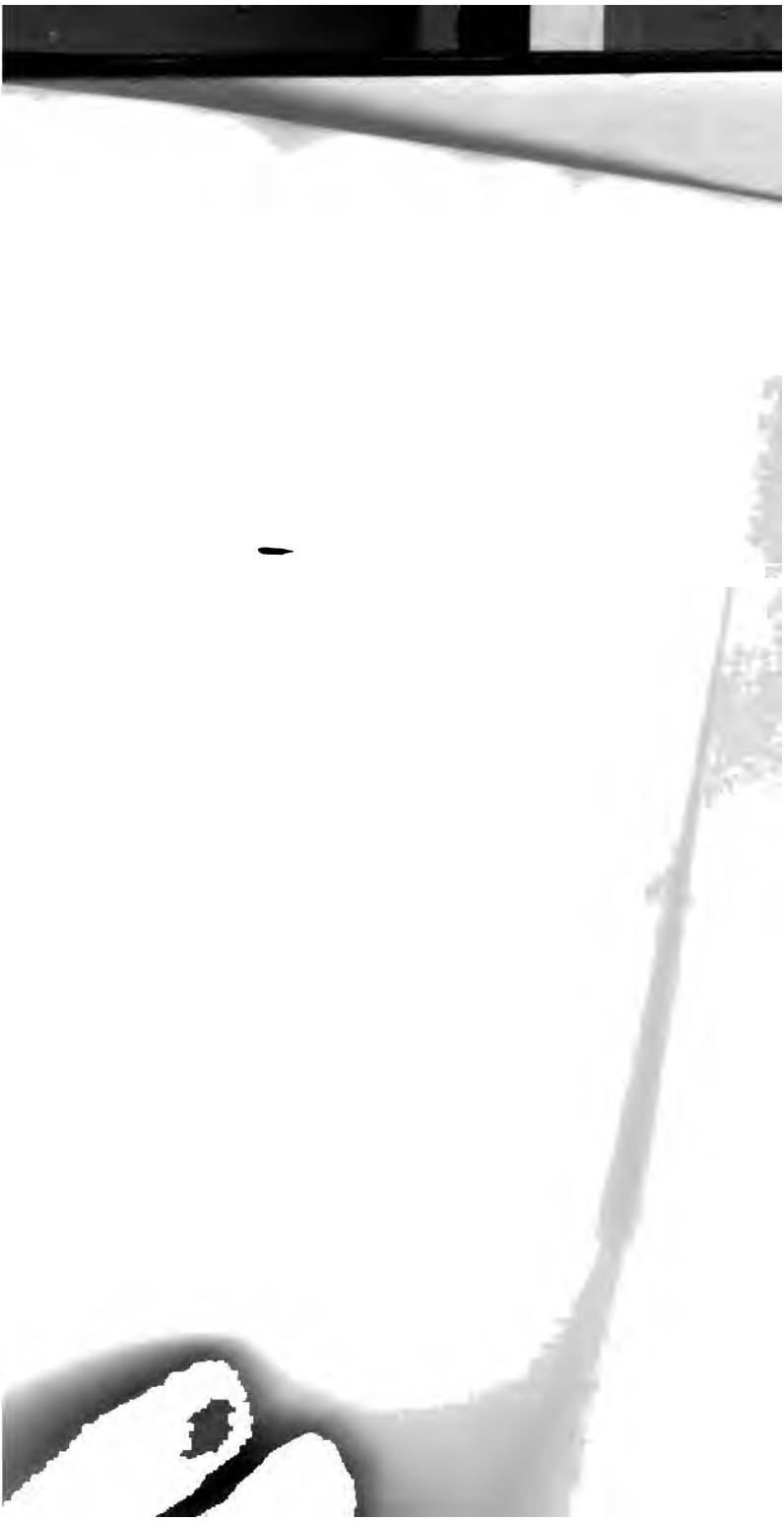
ANNEX



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AN

HISTORY

OF THE

Corruptions of Chriſtianity,

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY

Joſeph Prieſtley, LL.D. F.R.S.

THE SECOND EDITION.

Didſt thou not ſow good ſeed in thy field?—Whence then hath it tares?—

Matt. xiii. 27.

VOL. II.

BIRMINGHAM,
PRINTED BY J. THOMPSON,
FOR J. JOHNSON, N° 72, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD, LONDON.

1793.

LENOX LIBRARY
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*** (*b*) Signifies from the Bottom of the Page.

Page 5, l. 8, for *even*, read *were not even*
P. 18, l. 6, for *for*, read *from*
P. 21, l. 1, for , *before* read *before*,
P. 28, l. 11, (*b*) read *more than once on the same day*
P. 39, l. 1, (*b*) for *Breſſia*, read *Breſcia*
P. 57, l, 11, for *Palicians*, read *Paulicians*
Ibid, l. 16, for *ſynods*, read *ſynod*
P. 58, l. 1, read *and Mahometaniſm*
P. 87, l. 6, (*b*) for *practices*, read *practice*
P. 90, l. 3, for *I baptize*, read *I baptize thee*
P. 110, l. 11, for *only*, read *holy*
P. 117, l. 3, (*b*) for *at Caſtile*, read *of Caſtile*
P. 127, l. 4, for *Alciun*, read *Alcuin*
P. 138, l. 8, for *b·aſt*, read *beaſts*
P. 143, for *Part* VIII. read *Part* IX.
P. 148, l. 3, (*b*) for *to the end*, read *in the end*
P. 149, l. 6, for *Monatiſts*, read *Montaniſts*
Ibid, l. 9, (*b*) for *of*, read *for*
P. 151, l. 5, for *an*, read *the*
P. 169. l. 12, for *ſin*, read *ſins*
P. 172, l. 12, (*b*) for *watched*, read *watched over*
P. 184, l. 3, (*b*) for *would*, read *ould*
P. 191, l. 14, for 1536, read 1572
P. 209, l. 12, for *prevent*, read *prevented*
P. 222, l. 13, (*b*) for *were*, read *were called*
P. 243, l, 1, and 14, for *principle*, read *principal*
P. 292, l. 7, for *other*, read *the other*
P. 355, l. 1, (*b*) for *bear*, read *here*
P. 390, l. 7, (*b*) for *Hilariun*, read *Hilarion*
P. 401, l. 11, for *were*, read *where*
P. 406, l. 11, (*b*) for *was*, read *were*
P. 432, read *Section* ii.
P. 435, l. 11, (*b*) for *Canoniſt*, read *Canoniſts*
P. 455, l. 14, (*b*) for *as ſubject*, read *ſubject*
P. 485, l. 4, (*b*) for *on*, read *in*

THE

HISTORY

OF THE

Corruptions of Chriſtianity.

PART VI.

The Hiſtory of Opinions relating to the LORD'S SUPPER.

THE INTRODUCTION.

THERE is nothing in the whole hiſtory that I have undertaken to write, ſo extraordinary as the abuſes that have been introduced into the rite of the *Lord's ſupper*. Nothing can be imagined more ſimple in its original inſtitution, or leſs liable to miſapprehenſion or abuſe; and yet, in no inſtance whatever, has the depravation of the original doctrine and cuſtom proceeded to a greater height, or had more ſerious conſequences.

In alluſion, perhaps, to the feſtival of the paſſover, our Lord appointed his diſciples to eat

bread and drink wine in remembrance of him; informing them that the bread repreſented his body, which was about to be broken, and the wine his blood, which was about to be ſhed for them; and we are informed by the apoſtle Paul, that this rite is to continue in the chriſtian church till our Lord's ſecond coming. Farther than this we are not informed in the New Teſtament. We only find that the cuſtom was certainly kept up, and that the chriſtians of the primitives times probably concluded the public worſhip of every Lord's day, with the celebration of it. As the rite was peculiar to chriſtians, the celebration of it, was of courſe, in common with joining habitually in the public worſhip of chriſtians, an open declaration of a man's being a chriſtian, and more ſo indeed, than any other viſible circumſtance; becauſe other perſons might occaſionally attend the public worſhip of chriſtians, without bearing any proper part in it themſelves.

Let us now ſee what *additions* have been made to this ſimple inſtitution, in ſeveral periods, from the primitive times to our own. And for this purpoſe it will be moſt convenient to divide the whole hiſtory into four parts; the firſt from the age of the apoſtles to that of Auſtin, including his time, and that of the great men who were his cotemporaries; the ſecond extending from that period, to the time of Paſchaſius; the third, from him to the reformation; and the fourth, from that time to the preſent.

In

In writing the hiſtory of this ſubject, in each of the periods, I ſhall firſt note the changes of opinion with reſpect to the Lord's ſupper itſelf, together with the change of language which took place in conſequence of it. I ſhall then give an account of the ſuperſtitious practices that were grounded on thoſe opinions; and laſtly, I ſhall relate what particulars I have met with relating to the manner of celebration.

SECTION I.

The Hiſtory of the Euchariſt till the Time of Auſtin.

THE firſt new idea which was ſuperadded to the original notion of the Lord's ſupper, was that of its being a *ſacrament*, or an oath to be true to a leader. For the word *ſacrament* is not to be found in the ſcriptures, but was afterwards borrowed from the Latin tongue, in which it ſignified the oath which a Roman ſoldier took to his general. Thus, in the firſt century, Pliny reports, that the chriſtians were wont to meet together before it was light, and to bind themſelves by a ſacrament. This I would obſerve, is but a ſmall deviation from the original idea of the

Lord's ſupper; and though it be not the ſame with the true idea of it, as before explained, yet it cannot be ſaid to be *contrary* to it. Afterwards the word ſacrament came to be uſed by chriſtian writers in a very looſe manner, for every thing that was looked upon to be ſolemn or myſterious; and indeed, as biſhop Hoadley obſerves, for almoſt every thing relating to religion.

The next idea which was added to the primitive notion of the Lord's ſupper was of a much more alarming nature, and had a long train of the worſt conſequences. This was the conſidering of this inſtitution as a *myſtery*. And, indeed, the chriſtians affected very early to call this rite, one of the *myſteries of our holy religion.* By the term *myſtery* was meant, originally, the more ſecret parts of the heathen worſhip, to which ſelect perſons only were admitted, and thoſe under an oath of ſecrecy. Thoſe myſteries were alſo called *initiations*; thoſe who were initiated were ſuppoſed to be pure and holy; while thoſe who were not initiated were conſidered as impure and profane; and by theſe myſteries the heathens were more attached to their religion than by any other circumſtance whatever. This made the firſt chriſtians (many of whom were firſt converted from heatheniſm, and who could not all at once diveſt themſelves of their fondneſs for pomp and myſtery) wiſh to have ſomething of this nature, which was ſo ſtriking and captivating, in the chriſtian religion;

religion; and the rite of the Lord's ſupper ſoon ſtruck them, as what might eaſily anſwer this purpoſe.

When this new idea was introduced, they, in conſequence of it, began to exclude all who did not partake of the ordinance, from being preſent at the celebration of it. Thoſe who did not communicate, even were not allowed to know the method and manner in which it was adminiſtered. Tertullian, who wrote at the end of the ſecond century, ſeems to allude to this practice. "Pious initiations," ſays he*, "drive away the "profane, and it is of the very nature of myſ- "teries to be concealed, as thoſe of Ceres in "Samothrace," but as he is there defending the chriſtians from the charge of practiſing abominable rites in ſecret, he may only mean that, on the ſuppoſition of ſuch practices, no perſon could reveal them, their enemies not being preſent, and they would hardly do it themſelves. Indeed, it is moſt probable that this cuſtom of concealing the myſteries did not take place till the middle of the third century †. After this time, the council of Alexandria reproached the Arians with diſplaying the holy myſteries before the catechumens, and even the pagans, whereas "that which "is holy," they ſay, "ſhould not be caſt to the "dogs, nor pearls before ſwine ‡." In the fourth

* Apol. cap. vii. Opera, p. 8. † Larroche, p. 225.
‡ Sueur, A. D. 333.

century it was uſual to call the euchariſt a *tremendous myſtery*, a *dreadful ſolemnity*, and *terrible to angels*.

Another new idea annexed to the euchariſt was that of its being a *ſacrifice*; and this too was in compliance with the prejudices of the Jews and heathens, who in the early ages uſed to reproach the chriſtians with having no ſacrifices or oblations in their religion. We ſoon find, however, that this language was adopted by them, and applied to the Lord's ſupper. This language is particularly uſed by Cyprian, and in general the Lord's ſupper was called the *euchariſtical ſacrifice*, though, in fact, they only conſidered it as a *memorial* of the ſacrifice of Chriſt, or of his death upon the croſs.

It is evident, from the nature of the thing, that neither baptiſm nor the Lord's ſupper operate as a charm, or produce any immediate effect upon the mind, beſides impreſſing it with proper ſentiments and affections, ſuch as become chriſtians, and ſuch as are naturally excited by the uſe of theſe ſymbols. But we find, in very early ages, that both baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper were imagined to operate in a different and more direct method, ſo that the uſe of them was ſuppoſed to depend upon the mere act of adminiſtration. Both Juſtin Martyr and Irenæus thought that where was ſuch a ſanctification of the elements that there was *a divine virtue* in them.

This

This idea of there being a real virtue in the elements of bread and wine, after they were conſecrated, or ſet apart for this particular purpoſe, opened a door to endleſs ſuperſtitions, and ſome of a very dangerous kind; as chriſtians were led by it to put theſe merely external rites in the place of moral virtue, which alone has the power of ſanctifying the heart, and making men acceptable in the ſight of God. After this we are not ſurprized to find (and it appears as early as the ſecond century) that both baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper were thought to be *neceſſary to ſalvation.*

It is too early to look for the notion of the tranſmutation of the bread and wine into the real body and blood of Chriſt, but we find even in this early age language ſo highly figurative (calling the ſymbols by the name of the things repreſented by them) as very much contributed to produce this opinion in after ages. It was the cuſtom with the early Fathers to ſay that the bread and wine *paſſed* into the body and blood of Chriſt, and even that they are *tranſelemented* into them. They alſo uſe other expreſſions to the ſame purpoſe; meaning, however, by them, nothing more than that a divine virtue was communicated to them*.

"We do not conſider," ſays Juſtin Martyr†, "this bread and wine as common bread and wine.

* Larroche, p. 221. † Edit. Thirlby, p. 96.

"For, as Jeſus Chriſt was made fleſh, and had "fleſh and blood to procure our ſalvation, ſo we "learn that this aliment, over which prayers have "been made, is changed, and that by which our "fleſh and blood are nouriſhed is the body and "blood of Jeſus Chriſt. For the evangeliſts "teach us that Jeſus Chriſt took bread, and ſaid "*this is my body*. He alſo took the wine and "ſaid, *this is my blood*." Tertullian, however, ſays*, that by the words, *this is my body*, we are to underſtand the *figure* of my body.

The language of Cyril of Jeruſalem on this ſubject is peculiarly ſtrong, and might very well miſlead his hearers, whatever ideas he himſelf might annex to it. He ſays to the young communicants†, "Since Chriſt has ſaid, *this is my* "*body*, who can deny it? Since he has ſaid *this* "*is my blood*, who can ſay it is not ſo? He for-"merly changed water into wine, and is he not "worthy to be believed, when he ſays that he "has changed the wine into his blood. Where-"fore let us, with full aſſurance of faith take the "body and blood of Chriſt. For under the form "of bread the body is given to them, and under "the form of wine his blood." He then tells his pupils they muſt not judge of this by their ſenſes, but by faith.

This writer carried his idea of the ſanctity of the conſecrated elements ſo far, as not to allow

* Opera, p. 408. † Cat. 4ta. Opera, p. 292.

that

that they ever went into the *excrements* of the body; maintaining that they entered wholly into the ſubſtance of the communicants; and Chryſoſtom ſupported this opinion, by the compariſon of *wax*, which is conſumed in the fire, without leaving aſhes or ſoot*. This was going very far indeed for ſo early an age.

About two hundred years after Chriſt, chriſtians applied their thoughts very much to the giving of myſtical ſignifications to the ſacraments, as they were alſo fond of myſtical interpretations of ſcripture. Among other alluſions, a happy one enough was this, that the ſacramental bread, being compoſed of many grains of wheat, and the wine being made of many grapes, repreſented the body of the chriſtian church, which was compoſed of many believers, united into one ſociety. Cyprian was the firſt who advanced that by the *wine* was meant the blood of Chriſt, and by the water (which they always at that time uſed to mix with the wine) the *chriſtian people*; and that by the *mixture* of them the union between Chriſt and his people was repreſented. This idea continued a long time in the church. But ſome ſuppoſed that this *water and wine* were a memorial of the *water and blood*, which iſſued from the ſide of Chriſt, when he was pierced with the ſpear, as he hung on the croſs†.

* Baſnage, Hiſtoire des Egliſes Reformées, vol. i. p. 135.

† Larroche, p. 5.

It

It was a natural conſequence, of this ſuperſtitious reſpect for the euchariſtical elements, that many perſons began to be afraid of communicating. Accordingly we find that, whereas originally, all chriſtians who were baptized, and not under ſentence of excommunication, received the Lord's ſupper, yet in the time of Chryſoſtom ſo many abſtained from this part of the ſervice, that he was obliged to reprove them for it with great ſeverity; and various methods were taken to engage them to attend it.

When the bread was called the body of Chriſt, the *cloth* which covered it was uſually called *the cloth of the body*, and was conſidered as entitled to ſome particular reſpect. And we find that Optatus reproached the Donatiſts, that they had taken away theſe body-cloths, and that they had waſhed them, as if they had been dirty. Alſo Victor of Vita, complained that Proculus (the executioner of the cruelties of Genſeric, king of the Vandals againſt the catholics) had made ſhirts and drawers of them. This body cloth was to be of very fine linen, and not of ſilk, or of purple, nor of any coloured ſtuff, agreeable to an order made by pope Silveſter, or, as ſome ſay, pope Euſebius. Jerom treating of the euchariſt calls the table on which it was celebrated *a myſtical* table, whoſe very utenſils and ſacred coverings were not to be conſidered as things inanimate, and void of ſenſe, or to have no ſanctity, but

but to be worſhipped with the ſame majeſty as the body and blood of our Lord *.

In the fourth century the Lord's ſupper was celebrated ſometimes at the tombs of the martyrs, and at funerals; which cuſtom gave riſe to the maſſes which were afterwards performed in honour of the ſaints, and for the dead. Alſo, in many places, about the ſame time, the bread and wine were held up to the view of the people, before they were diſtributed, that they might be ſeen and contemplated with religious reſpect; from which the adoration of the ſymbols was afterwards derived.

Towards the end of the fourth century it was thought wrong to commit the blood of Chriſt to ſo frail a thing as *glaſs*. Jerom reproaches a biſhop of Thouloufe with this; he being a rich man, and able to afford a better veſſel, and more proper for the purpoſe †.

As the primitive chriſtians conſidered their joint-partaking of the Lord's ſupper as a bond of union among themſelves, it was natural to ſend part of the elements to thoſe perſons whoſe infirm ſtate of health, or neceſſary avocations, would not allow them to be preſent. For the ſame reaſon conſecrated bread was alſo ſent to

* Middleton's Introductory Diſcourſe, p. 60. † Larroche, p. 53.

the

the neighbouring, and often to diſtant pariſhes; as a token of brotherly communion. This they did, particularly at the feaſt of Eaſter; and provided no ſuperſtitious uſe had been made of it; there ſeems to have been little to complain of in the cuſtom. However, the council of Laodicea thought proper to forbid this ſending out of the elements, as a cuſtom borrowed from the Jews and the heretics. But pope innocent, who lived a century after, ſtill continued to ſend the conſecrated bread to the neighbouridg pariſhes *.

But the greateſt abuſe that was made of this cuſtom was in conſequence of the conſecrated elements being thought to be of uſe to the ſick, in a medicinal way, and to be a means of preſerving perſons in journies, and upon voyages; and as perſons might not always have carried home with them enough for theſe uſes, it was the cuſtom for the prieſts to keep a quantity of the conſecrated bread to diſtribute occaſionally, as it might be wanted. Auſtin ſays, "If any one fall "ſick, let them receive the body and blood of "Chriſt, and let him keep a part of this little "body, that he may find the accompliſhment of "what St. James ſays, *Let thoſe who are ſick go "to the church to receive ſtrength of body* †." This ſame Father alſo mentions a woman who had made a plaiſter of the ſacramental bread for a ſore eye ‡.

* Baſnage, vol. i. p. 111. † Ibid p. 161. ‡ Larroche, p. 6.

Some

Some of the antient chriſtians uſed to bury the ſacramental bread together with the dead; thinking, no doubt, that it would be of as much uſe to them in that long journey, as it had been in other ſhorter ones. However, in a council held at Carthage in 419, this practice was condemned; but it appears that the cuſtom was not wholly laid aſide at the end of the eighth century, though it had been prohibited again by the ſixth general council in 691. The reaſon was, that to bury theſe ſacred elements was now thought to be a profanation of them; ſo that a cuſtom which took its riſe from one degree of ſuperſtition, was aboliſhed by a greater degree of it; and of this we ſhall have other inſtances in the courſe of this hiſtory.

Having thus noted the changes in the doctrine of the euchariſt, and the ſuperſtitious practices which in theſe early times were derived from the erroneous opinions of chriſtians on the ſubject, I ſhall now relate what I have been able to collect concerning the manner in which it was adminiſtered.

In the firſt place it cannot be denied that in the primitive times, all thoſe who were claſſed among the *faithful* received the euchariſt every Lord's day. After reading the ſcriptures, and the expoſition of them, or the ſermon, at which others might attend, they proceeded to the public prayer,

prayer, in which the audience bore their part, at leaſt by ſaying occaſionally, *Amen*, and the ſervice conſtantly cloſed with the celebration of the euchariſt. We even find that young children, and indeed infants, communicated. This was clearly the caſe in the time of Cyprian. The cuſtom continued in the weſtern church till near the time of the reformation, and it is ſtill the practice of the eaſtern churches, and of every other part of the chriſtian world that was never ſubject to the ſee of Rome.

The different claſſes of chriſtians in the primitive times as they reſpected the Lord's ſupper, were as follows. There were four orders of the catechumens. The firſt were inſtructed at their own houſes, the ſecond heard the expoſition in the church, the third attended the public prayer, and the fourth were thoſe who were completely ready for baptiſm, for till that time they did not attend the celebration of the euchariſt, but were formally diſmiſſed at what is called *Miſſa Catechumenorum*, as the final diſmiſſion of the aſſembly was called *Miſſa Fidelium**.

The primitive chriſtians communicated after ſupper, but the cuſtom of celebrating it in the morning, was frequent in the church in the time of Tertullian, in conſequence, no doubt, of a

* Sueur, A. D. 216

ſuperſtitious

ſuperſtitious reverence for the elements, which led them to think that it was wrong to eat any thing before they partook of them, but it was ſtill uſual to communicate in the evening on Holy Thurſday. Chryſoſtom being charged with giving the euchariſt to ſome perſons after a repaſt, ſaid, "If I have done it, let my name be blotted "from the catalogue of biſhops, and let me not "be reckoned among the orthodox*.

It having been cuſtomary with the Jews whenever they made a ſolemn appearance before God, to bring ſome oblations; theſe chriſtians whenever they aſſembled for public worſhip (which they alſo conſidered as an appearing before God, and eſpecially in the more ſolemn part of the ſervice, the adminiſtration of the euchariſt) brought with them a quantity of bread and wine, and eſpecially the firſt fruits of their corn and grapes. Of theſe *offerings* or *oblations*, as they then affected to call them, a part was reſerved for the euchariſt, and a part alſo was eaten afterwards in common, in what they called their *Agapes*, or love feaſt, but the remainder was appropriated to the maintenance of the miniſters, and of the poor. Beſides bread and wine, it was the cuſtom to offer many other things of value at the ſame time. But at length they limited the oblations which were made on this particular occaſion to bread and wine only; and

* Baſnage, vol. i. p. 132.

afterwards

afterwards they uſually made for this purpoſe *one great loaf*, or cake, which they ſaid repreſented the unity of the church, and which was broken in public, and diſtributed to as many as communicated. In the fourth century ſome churches ſubſtituted what they called *eulogies*, or *holy bread*, for the bread of the Lord's ſupper*.

The antients in general believed that the water was mixed with the wine in our Saviour's own adminiſtration of the euchariſt, and therefore they did the ſame. This mixture of water with the wine is mentioned by Tertullian, and Cyprian pretends that it was of ſingular uſe. We find ſome chriſtians communicated with water only, from which they were called Aquarians. Theſe were not only Manicheans, who abhorred wine, but alſo others who were in the ſcheme of mortifying the fleſh by abſtaining from marriage, and the uſe of fleſh meat, as well as of wine.

When the elements began to be conſidered in a ſuperſtitious light, as ſomething more than mere bread and wine, there muſt have been a time when they imagined that this change took place; and in the early ages it was ſuppoſed to be made by the *prayer* which preceded the adminiſtration, and not by any particular form of words; and this is the idea that the greek church

* Baſnage, vol. i, p. 112.

ſtill

ſtill retains concerning conſecration. But afterwards, though it is not eaſy to determine when the change was ſuppoſed to take place as the prieſt was pronouncing the words *This is my body*, in Latin, *hoc eſt corpus meum*; as if there had been ſome peculiar virtue in the ſound of thoſe words, when pronounced by a perſon duly qualified to uſe them. Thus alſo the heathens imagined that the preſence of the inviſible divinity was made to dwell in an image by the prieſt pronouncing ſome form of words, which was termed *conſecrating* them.

The euchariſtical elements being now conſidered as ſomething *holy*, it was natural to ſuppoſe that a degree of holineſs belonged alſo to the table on which the ſervice was performed, and therefore that it ought to be prepared by ſome ceremony, for this holy purpoſe. Gregory Nyſſen, the ſame whoſe eloquence on the ſubject of the euchariſt has been recited already, is ſaid to have been the firſt who performed any ceremony of this kind. It was about the fourth century, as is generally agreed, that places of worſhip began to be conſecrated, though in ſome very ſimple manner, and it was then forbidden to celebrate the Lord's ſupper except in conſecrated places. When churches were built with more magnificence, under Conſtantine, there was a particular place called the *ſanctuary*, where the table or altar ſtood.

Lights in the day-time were uſual in many ceremonies in the heathen religion, whence an idea of *chearfulneſs*, and of *ſacredneſs* alſo, was annexed to them, and the chriſtians of thoſe ages, were but too ready to adopt the religious cuſtoms of the heathens, partly for their own attachment to them, and alſo with a view to make their religion more inviting to the pagans. The cuſtom of uſing wax-lights at the euchariſt, in particular, probably began in the time of Auſtin, in the fifth century. For, in the time of Gregory I. they were uſed at baptiſm; and Iſidore of Seville, who was cotemporary with Gregory, ſpeaks of it as a thing eſtabliſhed. "Thoſe," ſays he "who "in Greek are called *Acolytes*, are in Latin "called *link-bearers*, becauſe they carry the lights "when the goſpel is read; or, when the ſacrifice "is offered not to diſſipate darkneſs, but to ex-"preſs joy, to declare, under the type of corpo-"real light, the light ſpoken of in the goſpel." In bleſſing theſe torches and flambeaus, they ſaid, "O Jeſus Chriſt bleſs this wax, we beſeech thee, "that it may receive of thee ſuch a power and "benediction, that, in all places where it ſhall "be lighted and ſet, the devil may tremble and "fly for fear, and may no more attempt to mo-"leſt or ſeduce thoſe who ſerve thee.*" It muſt be obſerved that this cuſtom of uſing lights at the celebration of the euchariſt began in the Eaſt a little after the time of Gregory Nazianzen.

* Larroche, p. 537.

The

The bleſſing of the bread and wine uſed by our Saviour himſelf was probably nothing more than a very ſhort prayer, ſuch as we commonly uſe before meat. But when the adminiſtration of the euchariſt came to be a principal part of ſolemn religious worſhip, it is probable that the prayer which preceded it, and from which the whole ſervice got the name of *Euchariſt* was of ſome length, eſpecially as we do not find that prayer was uſed in any other part of the ſervice. In the third century it is particularly obſerved, that the prayers which preceded the celebration of the euchariſt were conſiderably lengthened, as well as that the ſolemnity and pomp with which it was adminiſtered were increaſed; and that at this time perſons in a ſtate of penitence, and others, were excluded from it, in imitation of the heathen myſteries.

It was the cuſtom within this period to aſk forgiveneſs of one another, as well as to give the *kiſs of peace*, or charity, before communion, the men kiſſing the men, and the women the women. They alſo uſed to kiſs the hand of the prieſt. This cuſtom of aſking pardon before communicating was uſed in France in the 11th century*.

At firſt the deacons generally adminiſtered the elements, but in the fourth council of Carthage, they were only ſuffered to adminiſter in

* Larroche p. 120.

of neceſſity. Afterwards they adminiſtered the cup only, while the prieſt who celebrated gave the bread. Sometimes women ſerved on this occaſion, and though it was forbidden by pope Gelaſius, the practice continued in many places till the tenth century.*

Cyril of Jeruſalem, at the end of the fourth century exhorted his communicants to receive the bread by ſupporting the right hand with the left, alſo to receive it in the hollow of the hand, and to take care that no crumb of it fell to the ground; and that in receiving the wine, they ſhould approach it with the body a little bowed, in token of veneration. The ſixth general council, ordered that the hand ſhould be held in the form of a croſs. It was the cuſtom in the time of Jerom, to kiſs the bread; and in the liturgy of Chryſoſtom, uſed by the Greeks, it is directed that he who receives the elements ſhould kiſs the hand of the deacon from whom he receives them†. It is needleſs to note the progreſs of ſuperſtition in all theſe obſervances.

When the ſervice was ended, the congregation was diſmiſſed by the prieſt, ſaying *Ite, Miſſa eſt*; which Polidore Virgil acknowledges was alſo the form of diſmiſſing the idolatrous ſervices of the pagans ‡. There was likewiſe, as was

* Larroche, p. 123. † Ib. p. 119. ‡ Sueur, A. D. p. 398.

obſerved

obſerved, before a formal diſmiſſion of the catechumens, before they proceeded to the celebration of the euchariſt, in the ſame words, and from this term *miſſa* the whole ſervice came afterwards to be called by that name, which by corruption is in the Engliſh language *maſs*.

The primitive chriſtians did frequently eat in common, before the celebration of the Lord's ſupper. To this kind of entertainment, to which every perſon brought what he thought proper, they gave the name of *Agape*, or *love-feaſt*; and it is thought to be alluded to in the epiſtles of Peter and Jude, 2 Pet. ii. 13. Jude 12. This cuſtom, however, of eating in common having been abuſed, it was forbidden by the council of Laodicea in 360. But before this time, when it began to be thought improper to eat any thing before the euchariſt, this feaſt was omitted till after the celebration*.

Such was the progreſs of ſuperſtition in this age of the church, which abounded with men of learning and writers. We are not to expect a reformation of theſe abuſes, in the next period of groſs darkneſs, and while the ſame cauſes of corruption, and eſpecially a fondneſs for pagan cuſtoms, and a willingneſs to gain over the pagans by adopting them, continued and increaſed. We

* Moſheim vol. i. p. 104.

have now ſeen how the pagan notion of *myſteries*, together with that of a *ſanctifying power* in the elements themſelves, contributed to introduce a train of ſuperſtitious practices into the chriſtian church; but we muſt go much deeper into this ſuperſtition in the two following periods, with leſs pleaſing proſpects than in the laſt. We have ſeen the ſhades of the evening cloſe upon us; we muſt now prepare to paſs through the darkneſs of the night, but with the hope that, as we come nearer to our own times, the day-light will viſit us again.

SECTION II.

The Hiſtory of the Euchariſt from the Time of Auſtin to that of Paſchaſius.

IN this period we find a very conſiderable advance towards the doctrine of *tranſubſtantiation*, which was afterwards eſtabliſhed in the weſtern church; but the firſt great ſtep towards it, as well as almoſt all the abuſes of which an account is given in the laſt ſection, was made in the Eaſt, where Anaſtaſius, a monk of Mount Sinai (in a treatiſe againſt ſome heretics who aſſerted that the body of Chriſt was impaſſible) ſaid that the elements of the Lord's ſupper were

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the true body and blood of Chriſt; for that when Chriſt inſtituted the euchariſt he did not ſay, this is the *type* or *antitype* of my body, but *my body*. This is evidently a language unknown to all the antients, when they ſpoke not rhetorically but gravely on the ſubject; and yet, on the whole, it is certain that he did not mean ſo much as was afterwards underſtood by that mode of ſpeaking *.

But John Damaſcenus, another monk, and a celebrated writer in the Eaſt, not only followed Anaſtaſius in his language, but made a real change in the *ideas* annexed to it; ſaying that, "when ſome have called the bread and wine "*figures* or *ſigns* of the body and blood of "Chriſt, as Baſil, they ſpake of them not after "conſecration, but before the oblation was con- "ſecrated." Jeſus," he ſays, "has joined to the "bread and wine his own divinity, and made "them to be his body and blood." He illuſtrates this in the following manner. "Iſaiah ſaw "a *lighted coal*; now a lighted coal is not mere "wood, but wood joined to fire; ſo the bread of "the ſacrament is not mere bread, but bread "joined to the divinity, and the body united to "the divinity is not one and the ſame nature, "but the nature of the body is one, and that of "the divinity united to it another †." In the ſecond council of Nice, when it was urged on

* Sieur, A. D. 637. † Larroche, p. 367.

one ſide that Chriſt had no other image than the ſacrament, it was argued by the council, that the ſacrament after conſecration was no image, but properly his body and blood*. This has been the faith of the Greek church ever ſince the time of this Damaſcenus, who wrote in the beginning of the eighth century; and his name is as great an authority in the eaſtern church, as that of Thomas Aquinas was afterwards in the weſtern.

In reality, the Greeks muſt conſider the euchariſtical elements as *another body of Chriſt*, to which his ſoul, or his divinity, bears the ſame relation that it did to the body which he had when on earth, and with which he aſcended to heaven. They muſt ſuppoſe that there is, as it were, a multiplication of bodies to the ſame ſoul. No real change, however, is by them ſuppoſed to be made in the ſubſtance of the bread and wine; only from being mere bread and wine, it becomes a new body and blood to Chriſt.

Whether this new opinion ſpread into the Weſt does not diſtinctly appear, and the two churches had not, at that time, much communication with each other. But from the ſame general cauſes the idea of ſomething myſtical and ſacred in the euchariſtical elements kept advanc-

* Taylor on the Grand Apoaſtcy, p. 160.

ing

ing in the Weſt, as well as in the Eaſt; and they were conſidered as bearing ſome peculiar relation to Chriſt; who was, therefore, thought to be, in ſome extraordinary manner, *preſent* with them, but in *what manner*, they had not perhaps any diſtinct idea.

When the euchariſtical elements were conſidered as ſo peculiarly ſacred, we are not ſurprized to find that many methods were uſed to prevent the loſs, or waſte of them: Among other methods, they began, pretty early in this period, to take the bread dipped in the conſecrated wine. This was particularly noticed in the 11th council of Toledo in 675, and in another at Braga in Gallicia, in which a decree was made to put a ſtop to this practice; but ſtill it was allowed that the euchariſt might be adminiſtered to ſick perſons and young children in this manner. The Armenians ſtill receive the euchariſt in this way, and the Moſcovites take the bread and wine together in a ſpoon *.

I have obſerved that in the former period, it was uſual for the communicants to carry ſome of the conſecrated bread home with them, and to take it with them when they went on a journey; but in the council of Saragoſſa, within the preſent period, they who did not eat the bread at

* Larroche, p. 146.

the

the time of communicating were anathematized. Thus a greater degree of ſuperſtition put an end to a practice which had been introduced by a leſs degree of it. However, the practice of conſecrating a great quantity of bread was kept up; and in the time of Charlemaigne expreſs directions were given for keeping it, in order to communicate the ſick*. This conſecrated bread, it had been the cuſtom to keep in a cloſe cheſt, in the church; but at a council of Tours, in 567, it was ordained that the *hoſt* (as it was then called) ſhould be kept not in a cheſt, but under the title of the croſs, to excite the devotion of the people †.

Among other ſuperſtitious cuſtoms within this period, we find that ſometimes the conſecrated wine was mixed with ink, in order to ſign writings of a peculiarly ſolemn nature. Thus pope Theodore, in the ſeventh century, ſigned the condemnation and depoſition of Pyrrhus the Monothelite; it was uſed at the condemnation of Photius by the Fathers of the council of Conſtantinople in 869; and Charles the bald, and Bernard count of Barcelona alſo ſigned a treaty with the ſacramental wine in 844. It is evident, however, from this very abuſe of the euchariſtical elements, that they were not at that time ſuppoſed to be the real body and blood of Chriſt;

* Ib. p. 167. † Sueur, A. D. 567.

for

for, ſince they have been thought to be ſo, it would be deemed a great profanation to make any ſuch uſe of them.

It is not denied that, originally, the celebration of the Lord's ſupper was a part of the public worſhip, in which all the congregation of the faithful joined; but in the church of Rome at preſent the prieſt alone communicates in general, while the congregation are mere ſpectators of what is doing, and only join in the prayers. This was occaſioned by the ſuperſtitious veneration for the elements, from which was naturally derived an idea of ſome particular preparation being neceſſary for the receiving of them. The firſt notice that we find of this kind of *maſs* was about the year 700; but we have ſeen that, even in the time of Chryſoſtom, the people in general began to decline communion; but in the time of Charlemaigne the prieſts were forbidden to celebrate maſs alone; and pope Soter ordained that no perſon ſhould celebrate maſs, unleſs the prieſt made a third*. Among other accuſations of John XII. he was charged with celebrating maſs without communion†.

No laws, however, could long check the torrent of this abuſe. It being imagined that the

* Larroche, p. 126. † Sueur, A. D. 963.

celebration

celebration of the maſs was offering the moſt acceptable ſacrifice to God, which would avail for the pardon of ſin, and for redeeming ſouls out of purgatory, large ſums of money were given and bequeathed to the prieſts for this purpoſe, which proved a ſource of immenſe wealth to them. But this abuſe was much increaſed when monks were allowed by pope Gregory to do the office of prieſts. This order of men had much leiſure for the purpoſe, and an idea of peculiar ſanctity was annexed to their character in the minds of the common people.

To the monks may be attributed the origin of *private chapels*, and the multiplication of altars in churches for celebrating ſeveral maſſes at the ſame time. For, according to antient cuſtom, it was not lawful to ſay more than one maſs, at which all aſſiſted; and it was a thing unheard of that any perſon ſhould celebrate maſs on the ſame day, upon the ſame altar, a cuſtom which is ſtill obſerved in the eaſtern churches. For the Greeks have but one altar in one church, nor do we find the mention of any more in the weſtern church till the eighth century. But in the time of Adrian I. the firſt, who lived towards the end of the eighth century, there is mention made of the *great altar* to diſtinguiſh it from others in the ſame church. Whenever the phraſe occurs in any period prior to this, by *altars* we are to underſtand the *tombs*

* Larroche, p. 47.

of

of the martyrs, which are often ſo called*. The firſt mention that we have of the euchariſt being celebrated more than once in the courſe of the ſame day, in any church, is in the fifth century, when Leo the firſt ordered it on great feſtival days, when the crowds were ſo great that the churches could not contain thoſe that reſorted to them.

To induce the common people to continue their offerings after they ceaſed to communicate, they were given to underſtand, that provided they kept up that cuſtom, the ſervice would ſtill be uſeful to them; and inſtead of a real communion with bread and wine duly conſecrated, the prieſts gave them a kind of ſubſtitute for it, and a thing of a much leſs awful nature, viz. bread, over which they prayed, and to which they gave the name of *hallowed bread*. This was about the year 700*.

It was in conſequence of few perſons offering themſelves to communion, that the prieſts got a habit of ſpeaking in a very low voice, a cuſtom which was afterwards continued through ſuperſtition. This is ſaid to have begun about the end of the tenth century; and ſome ſay that it proceeded from a report that God had puniſhed with ſudden death ſome ſhepherds, who ſung the words of conſecration in the fields†.

* Hiſt. of Antient Ceremonies, p. 88. † Larroche, p. 79.

Having

Having noted theſe general abuſes, reſpecting the euchariſt, I ſhall now conſider the method in which it was adminiſtered, going over the different parts of the ſervice for that purpoſe; and we ſhall find traces enow of ſuperſtition every ſtep we take.

As there is nothing preſcribed in the New Teſtament concerning the order of public worſhip, or the mode of celebrating the Lord's ſupper, different churches fell naturally into different methods with reſpect to them, as we ſee in what remains of ſeveral of the antient liturgies. That of moſt churches had probably been gradually altered, eſpecially as mens ideas with reſpect to the nature of the ſervice itſelf had changed. The preſent *canon of the maſs*, as it is now uſed in the church of Rome, was, for the moſt part, compoſed by Gregory the Great, who made more alterations in it than any of his predeceſſors. He introduced into it many pompous ceremonies, but it was ſeveral centuries before this canon was adopted by all the members of the Latin church. In 699, pope Sergius added to the canon of the maſs, that while the prieſt is breaking the bread. he ſhould ſing three times *Lamb of God who taketh away the ſins of the world, have mercy upon us*; but that at the third time, inſtead of the words *have mercy upon us*, he ſhould ſay, *grant us peace* *.

* Sueur.

Since

Since the celebration of the eucharist was now considered as a *proper sacrifice*, the table on which it was offered came of course to be an *altar*; and as altars in the Jewish church, and among the pagans, were consecrated, the christian altars must be so too. The first mention that is made of the consecration of altars (more than was observed to have been done by Gregory Nyssenus) is in the council of Agde in 506, when they were ordered to be consecrated both by chrism and by the benediction of the priest. In the ninth century they added water to the chrism, and incense, and other things. They also consecrated *three table cloths* of several fashions, and a kind of *veil* of several colours, according to the different days, &c *.

In order to be better entitled to the name of *altars*, and to correspond to the altars in the Jewish and pagan religions, all the wooden tables were removed, and all altars were ordered to be made of stone. And it was farther alledged in favour of this custom, that Jesus Christ is called *the corner stone*, and foundation of the church. This institution is ascribed to Silvester; but the decree is not found. It was a council of Epaone in 517, that forbad the consecration of altars, unless they were made of stone †.

To the due consecration of altars it is now requisite that there should be relics in them; but

* Larroche, p. 49. † Basnage, vol. i. p. 47.

this

this was far from being the caſe originally. For a council in the ſeventh century ordered that altars ſhould not be conſecrated in any place where a body had been interred*. The laſt thing which I ſhall obſerve in reſpect to altars is, that Bede is the firſt who makes any mention of *portable* ones.

It was a cuſtom in all this period not only to make uſe of *lights*, though in the day time, during the celebration of the euchariſt, but of *incenſe* alſo; and both theſe appendages were borrowed from the heathen ſacrifices, and were firſt adopted by the Greeks, and ſo early as the middle of the fifth century; mention being then made of aſſembling the chucrh by flambeaus and perfumes. But it is not ſaid that this was for the celebration of the euchariſt in particular†.

Originally, the *bread* that was uſed for the celebration of the Lord's ſupper, was ſuch as was preſented among other offerings on the occaſion. Afterwards it was the cuſtom to make one great loaf or cake, to ſupply all the communicants; and this was broken at the time of the celebration, and diſtributed in ſmall pieces to the communicants. But this cuſtom being attended with ſome loſs, ſome prieſts in Spain began about the ſeventh century, to prepare the euchariſtical bread

* Baſnage, p. 48. † Larroche, p. 526.

in

in a different manner, baking ſmall round pieces on purpoſe that there might not be occaſion to break it at all. But this innovation was not generally approved, and it was expreſsly forbidden by the council of Toledo in 693*. In time, however, the increaſing ſuperſtition of the age got the better of this regulation, and the cuſtom of making ſmall round *wafers* for the purpoſe of communion at length became univerſal in the church.

It was the cuſtom in the primitive church, as I have already obſerved, to give what is called the *kiſs of peace*, or of charity, immediately before communion. This, in time, was thought to be an indecent practice, and therefore ought to have been laid aſide altogether. However, Leo III. at the end of the ninth century, changed this cuſtom for that of kiſſing a plate of ſilver or copper, with the figure of a croſs upon it, or the relic of ſome ſaint after the conſecration of the elements †.

In the fifth century, it was the cuſtom for men to receive the bread with their naked hands, and the women (who perhaps did not expoſe their hands naked) in a clean cloth, which obtained the name of *Dominica*. Afterwards, in the farther progreſs of ſuperſtition, it came to be the cuſtom

* Larroche, p. 36. † Hiſt. of Antient Ceremonies, p. 90.

to receive it in veſſels of gold, &c. but this was forbidden in the ſixth general council in 680, and they were again ordered to receive it with the hand. It has been already obſerved that *glaſs* was thought to be too brittle a thing to receive the holy elements. Glaſs veſſels, however, continued to be made uſe of, ſo that it was thought neceſſary to forbid the uſe of them in a council held at Rheims under Charlemaigne; and in another council, held in the year 895, wooden veſſels were forbidden to be uſed for that purpoſe; and at preſent the Latin church does not ſuffer the conſecration to be made in any thing but in a chalice of gold, or ſilver, or at leaſt of pewter; and a council held at Albi, in 1254, commands all churches, the yearly rent of which amounts to

We ſee the effects of ſuperſtition as well in the method of diſpoſing of what remained of the conſecrated elements, as in the uſe of them. Some churches uſed to burn all that remained after communion. This was the cuſtom at Jeruſalem, and it is ſo with the Greeks at preſent; at leaſt, ſays Fleury*, they are reproached with it. At Conſtantinople it was formerly eaten by young ſcholars, ſent from the ſchool for that purpoſe, as is related by Evagrius, who wrote at the end of the ſixth century. The council of Toledo, in 693, left it to the liberty of each particular church, either to keep what remained of the conſecrated elements, or to eat it; but, in the latter caſe, it was ordained that the quantity conſecrated ſhould be moderate, that it might not oppreſs the ſtomachs of thoſe who were appointed to take it. But, in whatever manner they diſpoſed of theſe ſacred elements, it was the cuſtom not to leave any of them till the next day†.

One would imagine that we had ſeen ſuperſtition enough in this one article of chriſtian faith and practice within this period; but we ſhall find much greater abuſes in the next; and notwithſtanding the greater light of the preſent age, they contiuue unreformed in the church of Rome to this day.

* A. D. 1054. † Larroche, p. 171.

SECTION III.

The Hiſtory of the Euchariſt, from the Time of Paſchaſius to the Reformation.

WE are now arrived to the moſt diſtinguiſhed æra in the hiſtory of the euchariſt; after having ſeen how much the euchariſtical elements in this age of darkneſs had gained in point of *ſacredneſs* and *ſolemnity*, and how awful a thing the act of communicating was generally apprehended to be; ſo that commonly the prieſt alone communicated, and the people very ſeldom, except at the time of the greater feſtivals, and eſpecially at Eaſter.

This was in conſequence of the people in general being impreſſed with a confuſed notion that the euchariſtical elements were, in ſome ſenſe or other, *the body and blood of Chriſt*, and therefore that Chriſt himſelf was *preſent* in them. But in what manner he was preſent they ſeem to have had no clear idea. This general notion, however, paved the way for the capital addition that was made to the doctrine of the euchariſt by Paſchaſius Radbert, a monk of Corbie in France, who undertook to explain the manner in which the body of Chriſt is preſent in the euchariſt.

This

This he did in a treatiſe publiſhed in the year 818, in which he maintained that not only the bread and wine were changed by conſecration, into the real body and blood of Chriſt; but that it was the ſame body that had been born of the virgin Mary, and that had been crucified and raiſed from the dead. It was in ſupport of this opinion that he wrote the two books *on the Delivery of the Virgin Mary*, which I had occaſion to mention before; in which he maintained, that it was performed in a miraculous manner, without any opening of the womb*.

This opinion Paſchaſius himſelf ſeems to have been ſenſible was bold and *novel*. For the firſt time that he mentions it, after calling the euchariſtical elements the body of Chriſt in general, he adds, "and to ſay ſomething more ſurpriſing and "wonderful (*Ut mirabilius loquar*) it is no other "fleſh than that which was born of the virgin "Mary, which ſuffered upon the croſs, and which "was raiſed from the grave†."

Not depending intirely upon the *reaſons* which he was able to allege in favour of ſo extraordinary an opinion, he likewiſe produced in ſupport of it, what was no uncommon thing with the monks, and what had no ſmall weight with the common people, in that ignorant age, namely an

* Sueur, A. D. 818. † Ibid.

apparition, which for its ſingular curioſity, and as a ſpecimen of the impoſitions of thoſe times, I ſhall relate.

A prieſt whoſe name was Plecgills officiating at the tomb of St. Ninus, wiſhed, out of love, and not infidelity, to ſee the body of Jeſus Chriſt; and falling upon his knees, he aſked of God the favour to ſee the nature of the body of Jeſus Chriſt, in this myſtery, and to hold in his hands the form of that little child which the virgin had borne in her lap; when an angel cried to him, "Get up, quickly, and look at the infant, which "that holy woman hath carried, for he is cloathed "in his corporeal habit." The prieſt declared, that being quite terrified he looked up, and ſaw upon the altar the child that Simeon had held in his arms, that the angel told him he might not only ſee but *touch* the child, and that accordingly he took him and preſſed the breaſt of the child to his own, and after embracing him frequently, he kiſſed the God, joining his lips to the lips of Jeſus Chriſt. After this, he replaced the beautiful limbs of the God upon the altar, praying to God that he might reſume his former figure, and that he had ſcarcely finiſhed his prayer, when riſing from the ground, he found that the body of Jeſus Chriſt was reſtored to its former figure, as he had requeſted*.

* Gueur, A. D. p. 818.

Notwithſtanding

Notwithſtanding this miracle, and every thing elſe that Paſchaſius could allege in favour of his doctrine, it excited great aſtoniſhment, and was oppoſed by many perſons of learning and eminence. Among others, the emperor Charles the Bald was much offended at it, and by his particular order, the famous Bertram, or Rattram, wrote againſt the new opinion of Paſchaſius, and at the ſame time againſt his particular notion concerning the delivery of the virgin.

In conſequence of this, the doctrine of Paſchaſius, though publiſhed in the ninth century, does not appear to have gained many advocates till the eleventh, when it was oppoſed by Berenger archdeacon of the church of Angers in France, (whom I mentioned before as one of the moſt eminent ſcholars of his age) and his writings on this ſubject made a great impreſſion on the minds of many; ſo that though no leſs than ten or twelve councils were held on this ſubject, in all of which the doctrine of Berenger was condemned, Matthew of Weſtminſter ſays, that it had infected almoſt all France, Italy, and England; and though, when he was threatened, he was weak enough to ſign a recantation of his opinion, he certainly died in the belief of it. Berenger was followed by Peter and Henry de Bruis, whoſe diſciples were called *Petrobruſſians*, and by the Albigenſes in general; who in the twelfth century ſeparated from the church of Rome. Arnold of Breſſia alſo taught

the ſame doctrine in Italy, and for this, and his declaiming againſt the church of Rome in general, he was burned at Rome, in 1155 *.

It is remarkable that for two centuries the popes did not interfere in the controverſy about Paſchaſius. Moſt probably they thought with his adverſaries; and as very few joined him at firſt, and he was openly oppoſed by the learned men of the age, it ſeemed as if his opinion would have died away of itſelf. As ſoon, however, as it was perceived that the doctrine went down with the common people, and that it promiſed to give a high idea of the dignity and power of the prieſthood, the popes were ready enough to enforce it by their decrees, as we have ſeen in the caſe of Berenger. It was not, however, till the beginning of the thirteenth century that this doctrine was made an article of faith, viz. by a decree of Innocent III. at the council of Lateran, in 1215, the term *tranſubſtantiation* having been firſt uſed by Stephen biſhop of Autun, in the beginning of the twelfth century.

Even notwithſtanding this decree, ſeveral divines openly maintained a different opinion, thinking it ſufficient to acknowledge the *real preſence*, though they explained the manner of it differently from Innocent, and the followers of Paſcha-

* Larroche, p. 473.

ſius,

ſius; and John, ſurnamed *Pungens Aſinus*, a doctor of the univerſity of Paris, ſubſtituted the word *conſubſtantiation* inſtead of tranſubſtantiation, towards the concluſion of this century*. Others ſay that he maintained the *aſſumption* of the conſecrated bread by the divinity. However, he did not deny that the ſubſtance of the bread and wine remained in the elements; and yet the faculty at Paris did not condemn his opinion, but declared that both this, and the common doctrine of tranſubſtantiation, were probable ways of making the body of Chriſt exiſt in the ſacrament.

As the monks had contributed greatly to the eſtabliſhment of almoſt every other corruption of chriſtianity, they were no leſs active in promoting this. Among others, the name of Odo, biſhop of Clugni in France, in the tenth century, is mentioned as having been of eminent uſe on this occaſion. Indeed, another Odo, archbiſhop of Canterbury, of that age, is likewiſe ſaid to have been a great promoter of it. But there does not appear to have been any public act in favour of the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation in England, before the council of Oxford which condemned Wickliffe.

We cannot be ſurpriſed, that the circumſtance of all the known properties of bread and

* Moſheim, vol. iii. p. 106.

wine

wine remaining in the euchariſtical elements after conſecration, ſhould not a little embarraſs the advocates for the change of them into real fleſh and blood. On this account, Innocent III. acknowledged that, after conſecration, there did remain in the elements a certain *paneity* and *vineity*, as he called them, which ſatisfied hunger and thirſt. But afterwards they who maintained that the conſecrated hoſt retained the nature of bread, and nouriſhed the body, and eſpecially that any part of it was turned into *excrement*, were, in deriſion, called *Stercorariſts*. This term of reproach ſhews in what abhorrence all thoſe who did not aſſent to this new doctrine were then held. If ridicule and contempt were a proper *teſt of truth*, I doubt not but that thoſe who defended the abſurd doctrine of tranſubſtantiation would have had the advantage of the argument. Proteſtants would now only laugh at being called Stercoariſts, but at that time the laugh would probably not have been with us, but againſt us. That was not an age of experiment, or it might have been eaſily decided, viz. by giving a man nothing but conſecrated bread, whether it turned to nouriſhment and excrement or not; but the very propoſal would have been deemed impious; and might have been very hazardous to the propoſer.

Conſidering the great difficulty of forming any conception concerning this converſion of the bread and wine into real fleſh and blood, it is no wonder

wonder that many doubts ſhould have been ſtarted, and different opinions ſhould have been held concerning it; and that they ſhould even continue to be held, notwithſtanding the moſt authoritative deciſions reſpecting it. Peter Lombard, cotemporary with Stephen of Autun above mentioned, approved of this doctrine of tranſubſtantiation, but could not determine of what *kind* the change was; whether it was only *formal*, or *ſubſtantial*, that is, whether it affected the ſenſible properties of the elements, or the real ſubſtance of them*.

It was alſo a queſtion whether the *water* (which it was always the cuſtom to mix with the wine before conſecration) was changed immediately into the blood of Chriſt, or whether it was changed into wine firſt. Paſchaſius himſelf had aſſerted the former, but after long debates it was determined by Innocent III. and the ſchoolmen ſupported him in it, that the water is changed into wine before it is changed into the blood of Chriſt. See Baſnage's Hiſtoire des Egliſes Reformées, vol. iii. p. 681, where this and other difficulties on the ſame ſubject are particularly conſidered. It is ſufficient for my purpoſe to give a ſpecimen of them.

In this, and ſeveral other reſpects, a conſiderable latitude of opinion was formerly allowed in

* Larroche, p. 183.

the

the church of Rome; and indeed the doctrine of *tranſubſtantiation* did not properly become an article of faith before it was made to be ſo by the council of Trent. The cardinal D'Ailli, at the council of Conſtance, ſpoke of the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation as an *opinion* only, and ſaid that it could not be clearly inferred from the ſcriptures, that the ſubſtance of bread did not remain in the ſacrament *.

At the council of Trent, the Franciſcans maintained that the body of Chriſt deſcended from heaven, in order to be changed into the form of bread and wine, though it did not quit its former place, whereas the Dominicans ſaid, that Jeſus Chriſt did not come from any other place, but that he was formed in the hoſt, the ſubſtance of the bread being changed into that of his body. The council did not decide this queſtion, but in their decrees made uſe of ſuch terms as both parties might adopt †.

When the great difficulty of one ſingle converſion of any particular quantity of bread and wine into the body and blood of Chriſt was got over, one would imagine that another difficulty, no leſs inſuperable, would have occurred, with reſpect to the multitude of conſecrations performed in different places at the ſame time. But

* Larroche, p. 492. † Baſnage, vol. iii. p. 669.

Guimond,

Guimond, who wrote againſt Berenger, in 1075, made nothing of theſe, or of ſtill greater difficulties. "Every ſeparate part," ſays he, "of the "euchariſt is the whole body of Chriſt. It is "given entire to all the faithful. They all re-"ceive it equally. Though it ſhould be celebrated "a thouſand times at once, it is the ſame indivi-"ſible body of Chriſt. It is only to *ſenſe* that a "ſingle part of the hoſt appears leſs than the "whole, but our ſenſes often deceive us. It is "acknowledged that there is a difficulty in *com-"prehending* this, but there is no difficulty in *be-"lieving* it. The only queſtion is, whether God "has been willing to make this change? It is "like the voice of a ſingle man, which all the au-"dience hears entire." He exhorts heretics to yield to the truth, becauſe, ſays he, "we are not "now contending for victory, as in the ſchools, "or for any temporal intereſt, as in the ſecular "courts. In this diſpute nothing leſs is depend-"ing than eternal life *."

When it was objected to Guimond, that the rats ſometimes eat the conſecrated bread, he replied, that either the ſenſes were deceived, or the body of Chriſt did not ſuffer any more in the rat, than in the ſepulchre, or that the devil put real bread into it on which men and rats might feed †.

* Fleury. † Baſnage, vol. ii. p. 120.

The

The language in which ſome of the popiſh prieſts have boaſted of the power which this doctrine of tranſubſtantiation gives them, would excite the greateſt ridicule, if there was not a mixture of impiety with the abſurdity of it. "On "our altars," ſay ſome of them, "Jeſus Chriſt "obeys all the world. He obeys the prieſt, let "him be where he will, at every hour, at his "ſimple word. They carry him whither they "pleaſe. He goes into the mouth of the wicked "as well as of the righteous. He makes no re-"ſiſtance, he does not heſitate one moment*." Some prieſts boaſted that they had even more power than the bleſſed virgin, becauſe they could create their creator whenever they pleaſed; whereas ſhe had conceived him but once†.

So much is made to depend on the power and *will* of the prieſt, with reſpect to the euchariſt, and the ſacraments in general, in the church of Rome, as, I ſhould think, muſt occaſion a good deal of anxiety on the part of thoſe who receive them. For they believe that the efficacy of all the ſacraments depends upon the *intention* of him that adminiſters them. This is expreſsly determined in a decree of pope Eugenius; and at the council of Trent an anathema was pronounced on thoſe who denied it. This is even carried ſo far, that

* Baſnage, vol. i. p. 26. † Ib. vol. i. p. 423.

in

in one of the rubrics of the Miſſal, it is given as a rule, that if the prieſt who goes to conſecrate twelve hoſts, ſhould have a general intention to leave out one of them it will affect them all *. Luther mentions ſome prieſts at Rome, who acknowledged that inſtead of pronouncing the proper words of conſecration, only ſaid to themſelves, *Bread thou art, and bread thou ſhalt remain* †.

All the diſputes about the nature of the euchariſtical elements were not confined to the weſtern church, in this period; for at the beginning of the thirteeth century the Greeks were much agitated about this ſubject; ſome affirming that the *myſteries*, as they called them, were incorruptible, while others maintained that they were not: when Zonaras, a Greek friar, happily found out a middle way, which ſhewed no leſs ingenuity than had been diſplayed on the ſame ſubject by many of the monks or ſchoolmen in the Weſt. The conſecrated bread, he ſaid, was the fleſh of Chriſt, as dead, and therefore corruptible; but that after it was eaten, and thereby gone, as it were, into the ſepulchre it became incorruptible; becauſe the body of our Lord did not remain long dead and buried, but roſe again †.

The doctrine of tranſubſtantiation was the cauſe of a great variety of new ceremonies and in-

* Burnet on the Articles, p. 370. † Baſnage, vol. iii. p. 687.
‡ Larroche, p. 494.

ſtitutions

ſtitutions in the church of Rome. Hence, among other things, thoſe rich and ſplendid receptacles which were formed for the reſidence of God, under this new ſhape, and the lamps and other precious ornaments that were deſigned to beautify this habitation of the Deity; and hence the cuſtom of carrying about this divine bread in ſolemn pomp, through the public ſtreets, when it is to be adminiſtered to ſick and dying perſons, with many other ceremonies of the like nature. But what crowns the whole was the *feſtival of the holy ſacrament.*

This was an inſtitution of Urban IV. in 1264, on the pretended revelation of one Juliana, a woman of Liege, who ſaid that it was ſhewed her from heaven, that this particular feſtival day of the holy euchariſt, had always been in the councils of the ſovereign Trinity; but that now the time of revealing it to men was come. In the decree of Urban it is ſaid, "this feſtival "day properly belongs to the ſacrament, becauſe "there is no ſaint but what has his proper feſti-"val; that this is intended to confound the un-"belief and extravagance of the heretics, and to "repair all the faults that men might be guilty of "in other maſſes*." This feſtival is attended with a proceſſion in which the hoſt is carried in great pomp and magnificence. No leſs a perſon

* Larroche, p. 581.

than

than Thomas Aquinas compoſed the office for this great ſolemnity.

Notwithſtanding all this pomp and ſplendor, which ſeldom fail to have charms for the bulk of mankind, this decree of Urban was not univerſally obſerved; and therefore it was confirmed by another bull of Clement V. But when the minds of men were a little enlightened after the reformation by Luther, this ſolemnity became the topic of much ridicule. On this account Catharine of Medicis wrote to the pope in 1561, as Thuanus informs us, to requeſt the abolition of this feſtival, becauſe it was the occaſion of much ſcandal, and was not at all neceſſary. It may not be amiſs to give a more particular account of ſome of the other new ſuperſtitions mentioned above.

It was towards the end of the ſixth century that the *elevation of the hoſt* was firſt practiſed in the eaſtern church; but then it was intended to repreſent the elevation of Chriſt upon the croſs, and was made immediately before the communion; and there is no mention of this ceremony in the weſtern church before the eleventh century. But then it immediately followed the conſecration, though no adoration is ſaid to have been intended by this ceremony till the thirteenth century, when it was expreſsly appointed in the conſtitutions of Honorius III.

and Gregory the IX. the latter of whom in 1227, ordered the ringing of a bell, to warn the people to fall down on their knees, and adore the conſecrated hoſt *. This, however, ſeems to have been done before by Guy Paré, the pope's legate in Germany; who, when he was at Cologne, in 1201, ordered, that when the hoſt was elevated in the celebration of the maſs, the people ſhould proſtrate themſelves in the church at the ſound of a bell †.

The ceremony of carrying the hoſt in proceſſion to communicate the ſick, ſeems to have been firſt uſed in this country. For, at the end of the twelfth century, Hubert archbiſhop of Canterbury, and legate of pope Celeſtine, held a ſynod at York, in which, among other things, he commanded that when any ſick perſons were to receive the communion, the prieſt himſelf ſhould carry the hoſt, cloathed with his proper habits, and with lights borne before it, ſuitable to ſo great a ſacrament ‡. We are alſo informed that, in the beginning of the thirteenth century, Odo, biſhop of Paris, in one of his ſynods, made ſeveral conſtitutions relating to the ſacrament; as about the manner of carrying it to the ſick, of the adoration of the perſons who ſhould meet it, of keeping it in the beſt part of the

* Larroche, p. 102. † Hiſtoire des papes, vol. iii. p. 131.
‡ Ib. p. 483.

altar,

altar, of locking it up ſafe, with ſeveral precautions in caſe it ſhould happen that any part of the conſecrated elements ſhould fall to the ground, or any fly or ſpider ſhould fall into the wine *.

Conſidering how ſolemn a thing the buſineſs of *communicating* was made, in conſequence of the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation, we do not wonder that it was ordered by the council of Trent that, how contrite ſoever a ſinner ſhould feel himſelf, he ſhould not approach the holy euchariſt without having made his *ſacramental confeſſion*, nor at the ſolemnity which the receiving of the communion gave to an oath. This appeared, when pope Gregory VII. propoſed to the emperor Henry, who was charged with many crimes, to exculpate himſelf, by taking one part of a conſecrated hoſt, while he himſelf ſhould take the other. This propoſal ſtaggered the emperor ſo much, that he deſired the affair to be referred to a general council †. But we are more ſurpriſed that, upon any occaſion whatever, any perſon ſhould be permitted to *eat* before he received the communion; and yet, application being made to the pope, on the part of the king of France, in 1722, that he might take ſome nouriſhment before he received the communion, on the day of his conſecration, as it was thought that

* Larroche, p. 484. † Fleury, A. D. 1077.

he would not be able to go through the fatigue of the ceremony without it, the requeſt was granted. It muſt be preſumed, however, that no other than the pope himſelf could have given ſo great a diſpenſation *.

It was owing to the great awfulneſs of the real maſſes, and the many ceremonies that were neceſſary to be obſerved in the celebration of them, that, for four or five hundred years, what are called *dry maſſes* (or the ceremony of the maſs without the conſecration of the elements) were much uſed in the church of Rome. They were more eſpecially uſed by gentlemen who went a hunting early in the morning, or returned late, or when a new married couple wanted to receive benediction, &c. St. Louis often uſed this ceremony on board his veſſel, and it ſerved for a conſolation to pilgrims, when they had no opportunity of having real maſſes in their return from the Holy Land. Theſe dry maſſes were ſo common at one time, that there was a rubric in the Romiſh ritual prepared for them. But the reformation opening mens eyes upon the ſubject, Eccius confeſſed that what had been practiſed ſo long, was, in truth, an impiety and blaſphemy againſt God. The council of Trent did not however correct the abuſe; but the biſhops ſince that time have aboliſhed it by degrees, and

* Hiſt. des Papes, vol. v. p. 499.

now

now it is only uſed on Good Fridays, and during ſtorms at ſea *.

We ſee the farther progreſs of ſuperſtition in the various methods that were deviſed in order to prevent the waſte or abuſe of the conſecrated elements, which increaſed after the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation. In the tenth century the prieſts began to put the bread into the mouths of the communicants, and in the eleventh they began in ſome churches, to uſe little hoſts, like *wafers*, made round, white, and very thin; but this was not till after the condemnation of Berenger, and was diſliked by many at that time; and the former cuſtom of breaking the bread into little pieces, and alſo that of giving the bread ſteeped in the wine were ſtill uſed in many places, till near the end of the twelfth century, after which the uſe of thin wafers became univerſal.

At length, in order to leave the leaſt room for waſte or abuſe poſſible, the cuſtom of communicating the laity with the *bread only* was introduced; and the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation made this practice much eaſier than it could otherwiſe have been. For it being now agreed that the conſecrated bread was the *whole* body of Chriſt, it contained the blood of courſe; and con-

* Baſnage, vol. iii. p. 686.

ſequently the wine, which was the blood only, became ſuperfluous.

Thomas Aquinas defended the cuſtom of communicating with the bread only, but he ſays that it was not obſerved in all churches; and the laity, in many places, in order to prevent the ſpilling of the wine, or as they called it, the blood of Chriſt (againſt which they were always moſt particularly cautioned) ſucked it through quills or ſilver pipes, which were faſtened to their chalices for that purpoſe. But at length, and eſpecially from the cuſtom of giving the bread ſteeped in the wine, came by degrees, the cuſtom of *communion in one kind only*, without any expreſs authority for the purpoſe, in almoſt all the weſtern churches, till it was eſtabliſhed by the council of Conſtance, in 1415. But the cuſtom of communicating in both kinds was ſtill practiſed in ſeveral places, and the pope himſelf is ſaid at one time to have adminiſtered the wine to the deacons and miniſters of the altar, and to other perſons of eminent piety, whom he thought worthy of ſo great a gift.

The council of Trent confirmed that of Conſtance, but left it to the pope to grant the uſe of the cup to thoſe whom he ſhould think proper. Accordingly Pius IV. granted the communion in both kinds to thoſe who ſhould demand it, provided they profeſſed to believe as the church

church did in other reſpects*. The Bohemians alſo were allowed, with the pope's conſent, to make uſe of the cup.

The high reverence for the euchariſt, which was produced by the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation, made a change in the poſture of receiving it. For till the thirteenth century, all perſons had communicated *ſtanding*, but about that time the cuſtom of receiving it *kneeling* came into uſe, and this is continued ever ſince in the church of Rome, and from that in the church of England. Frequent communion alſo was now no more to be expected, and indeed ſo early as the tenth century, Ratherius biſhop of Verona was obliged to order his prieſts to warn believers to come four times a year to the communion †, and now the catholics are not required to communicate more than once a year, and this is generally at Eaſter.

There are various other ſuperſtitious practices reſpecting the euchariſt in the church of Rome, the origin of which it is not eaſy to trace. There are ſix ſeveral ſorts of *veſtments* belonging to the officiating prieſt, and eight or nine to the biſhop, and there is not one of them but has ſome myſterious ſignification, and a correſpond-

* Hiſt. des Papes, vol. iv. p. 679. † Larroche, p. 137.

ing ſeparate conſecration; not to mention the different *colours* of them, and the different occaſions on which they are uſed; and they are all ſo neceſſary, that the ſmalleſt variation in the ritual, makes the maſſes be deemed imperfect.

As I obſerved before, that two maſſes muſt not be celebrated on the ſame altar in the courſe of one day, and even a prieſt cannot officiate at any altar, when a biſhop has done it before him, they are now multiplied exceedingly. The maſſes alſo are reckoned defective, unleſs the altar be covered with three cloths, conſecrated by the biſhop, the laſt of which muſt be longer than the other; and it muſt, after all, be covered with a *ſtuff* of ſome particular colour, according to the feſtival on which it is uſed. But the altar muſt be ſtripped of all its ornaments on Good Friday, for reaſons which may be ſeen in Baſnage, vol. i. p. 48, together with many other ſuperſtitious obſervances relating to the euchariſt, which I do not think it worth while to recite.

In the eleventh century there aroſe violent debates between the Greek and Latin churches on account of the former uſing *unleavened bread* in the celebration of the euchariſt. Such, however, it is very evident, muſt have been the bread

bread that our Saviour himſelf made uſe of in the inſtitution, as there was no leaven to be had during the whole ſeaſon of paſſover; and at length the Latin church conformed to this cuſtom.

Conſidering the many groſs abuſes which prevailed with reſpect to the Lord's ſupper, after the time of Paſchaſius, it is no wonder that we meet with ſome perſons who laid it aſide altogether. This was the caſe with the *Palicians* in the ninth century, who conſidered both baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper as ſomething figurative and parabolical *. This was alſo the caſe with ſome perſons in France, in the beginning of the eleventh century, and they were condemned at the ſynods of Orleans, and again at Arras in 1025 †. Alſo in the twelfth century, one Tanchelin perſuaded the people of Antwerp, and other perſons in Flanders, that receiving the Lord's ſupper was not neceſſary to ſalvation. But indeed this he might do, without wiſhing them to omit the celebration of it altogether.

As little can we wonder that unbelievers ſhould take advantage of ſuch a doctrine as this, to treat the chriſtian religion with contempt. Averroes, the great free-thinker of his age, ſaid

* Moſheim, vol. ii. p. 178. † Fleury.

that

that Judaiſm was the religion of children, Mahometaniſm that of hogs; but he knew no ſect ſo fooliſh and abſurd as that of the chriſtians, who adored what they eat*.

SECTION IV.

Of the Recovery of the genuine Chriſtian Doctrine concerning the Lord's Supper.

As the corruption of this doctrine took place very early in the chriſtian church, and proceeded farther than any other, ſo it was with great difficulty rectified; and indeed it is in general but very imperfectly done to this day, eſpecially in the eſtabliſhed reformed churches. The minds of the reformers, in general, were impreſſed with an idea of ſomething peculiarly myſterious and awful in the nature of the euchariſt, as well as with a firm perſuaſion concerning the divinity of Chriſt.

Wickliffe was late in ſettling his notion about the Lord's ſupper; ſo that, in different parts of his writings, he contradicts himſelf on this

* Memoires pour la vie de Petrarch, vol. iii. p. 760.

ſubject.

ſubject*. John Huſs believed the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation and the real preſence; but in anſwer to a perſon who had ſaid that a prieſt, after his conſecration, was the *Father of God*, and the *creator of God's body*, he wrote a treatiſe to prove that Jeſus Chriſt is the author of the tranſubſtantiation, and the prieſt only the miniſter of it †.

It is remarkable, that with reſpect to moſt of the reformers from popery in the ſixteenth century, the article of the euchariſt was the laſt in which they gained any clear light, the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation being that which they parted with with peculiar reluctance, and in all public diſputations their popiſh adverſaries had more advantage with reſpect to this than to any other ſubject. They advanced to the conferences with the utmoſt boldneſs when this was to be the ſubject of their diſputation, having the prejudices of their audience, and in a great meaſure, thoſe that were their adverſaries too, on their ſide.

Though Luther rejected tranſubſtantiation, he nevertheleſs retained the doctrine of the *real preſence* of the body of Chriſt in the euchariſt; believing that even the body of Chriſt might be omnipreſent, as well as his divinity; and in the Lutheran *Form of concord*, which they made the terms of communion with them, this article was

* Gilpin's Life of him, p. 65. † Lenfant's Hiſtory of the Council of Conſtance, vol. i. 432.

inſerted.

inſerted. Luther, in his attempts to explain his doctrine on the ſubject of the eucharist (which, to diſtinguiſh it from that of the papiſts, he called *conſubſtantiation*) ſaid that as in a red hot iron, two diſtinct ſubſtances, the *iron* and the *fire* are united, ſo is the body of Chriſt joined with the bread in the euchariſt*. Some Lutherans maintained, that all the properties of the divine nature were communicated to the human nature of Chriſt, and conſequently its omnipreſence, by the hypoſtatical union between them†. But theſe were more rigid than Luther himſelf, and it is ſuppoſed that being convinced by the reaſons of Melanchton, he would have entertained the opinion of the other reformers on this ſubject, if death had not prevented him‡. Carolſtadt, Luther's colleague, maintained that the bread and wine were no other than *ſigns* and *ſymbols*, deſigned to excite in the minds of chriſtians the remembrance of the ſufferings and death of Chriſt, and of the benefits which ariſe from them §.

It is remarkable that Zuinglius was much more rational than Luther on this ſubject. For he, like Carolſtadt, conſidered the bread and wine as no more than ſigns and ſymbols of the body and blood of Chriſt, and that we derive no benefit from the euchariſt, except what ariſes from

* Moſheim, vol. iii: p. 331. † Ib. vol. iv. p. 75.
‡ Baſnage, vol. iii. p. 331. § Moſheim, vol. iii. p. 331.

the

the recollection of the merits of Chriſt*. He would not even allow the miniſters of the church the power of excluding flagitious members from church communion, but left all puniſhment to the civil magiſtrate †. Upon the whole, Zuinglius ſeems to have thought as rationally on the ſubject of the euchariſt, as Socinus, who alſo conſidered it merely as a commemoration of the death of Chriſt.

Calvin was much leſs rational. For he ſuppoſed that a certain divine virtue or efficacy was communicated by Chriſt, together with the bread and wine ‡. And he not only excluded vicious perſons from communion, but likewiſe procured their baniſhment from the city §.

We have a remarkable example of the confidence of the catholics on the ſubject of the euchariſt in the famous conference of Poiſſy, in 1561, held in the preſence of Charles IX. and Catharine of Medicis, in the court of France, between a number of popiſh and proteſtant divines, of whom the cardinal of Lorraine was the principal on the ſide of the catholics, and Beza on that of the proteſtants. The cardinal, in his ſpeech on this ſubject, ſays, "We "muſt always oppoſe theſe words of Chriſt, *This* "*is my body*, to all argumentations, judgments,

* Moſheim, vol. iv. p. 76. † Ib. vol. iv. p. 115.
‡ Ib. p. 79. § Ib. p. 115.

"and

" and ſpeculations of the underſtanding. They " will be fire and thunder to all conſciences. Let " us believe the Lord, and obey him in all things, " and places; let us not contradict him, becauſe " what he tells us ſeems abſurd, improper, and " contrary to our ſenſes and thought. Let his " word overcome every thing, and be unto us, " as it is, the moſt precious thing. This it be- " comes us to do every where, but eſpecially in " the holy myſteries. Let us not look only to the " things we ſee, but let us obſerve his word, for " his word is infallible, and cannot be falſe or de- " ceive us. On the contrary, our ſenſes are eaſily " impoſed upon, and deceive us often. Since " then he has ſaid, *this is my body*, let us not doubt " of it, but believe, obey, and look upon him " with the eyes of our underſtanding, &c *.

On moſt other ſubjects the popiſh advocates rather declined the conteſt, but in this they thought they could triumph. This conference ended as all others in thoſe days did, without giving any ſatisfaction to either party. The cardinal himſelf would have conſented to an article on this ſubject ſufficiently agreeable to the Lutheran doctrine, viz. That the *ſubſtance* of the body and blood of Chriſt is in the euchariſt; but his brethren would not admit of it, thinking it captious and heretical †.

* Laval's Hiſtory of the Reformation in France, vol. i. p. 536.
† Ib. p. 583.

It

It is the doctrine both of the church of England, and of the eſtabliſhment in Scotland, that ſome peculiar *divine virtue* is communicated with the euchariſtical elements, when they are properly received, and therefore more preparation is enjoined for receiving this ordinance, than for attending public worſhip in general. In the twenty-fifth article of the church of England it is ſaid, that "ſacraments ordained by Chriſt, be not only "badges or tokens of chriſtian mens profeſſion, "but rather they be mens certain ſure witneſſes, "and effectual ſigns of grace, and God's good "will towards us, by the which he does work "inviſibly in us, and doth not only quicken, "but alſo ſtrengthen and confirm our faith in "him."

In the *Aſſembly's catechiſm*, a ſacrament is defined to be "an holy ordinance, inſtituted by "Chriſt; wherein, by ſenſible ſigns, Chriſt and "the benefits of the new covenant, are repre-"ſented, ſealed, and applied to believers." The Lord's ſupper in particular is ſaid to be "a ſa-"crament, wherein, by giving bread and wine, "according to Chriſt's appointment, his death is "ſhewed forth, and the worthy receivers are not "after a corporeal and carnal manner, but by "faith, made partakers of his body and blood, "with all its benefits, to their ſpiritual nouriſh-"ment, and growth in grace." Agreeably to theſe ideas, it is there ſaid that, "it is required

"of

" of them who would worthily partake of the " Lord's ſupper, that they examine themſelves, " of their knowledge to diſcern the Lord's body, " of their faith to feed upon him, of their repent- " ance, love, and new obedience, leſt, coming " unworthily, they eat and drink judgment to " themſelves."

This article of ſuperſtition has great hold on the minds of Diſſenters in general, the Independants requiring before admiſſion to communion, an account of what they call an *experience* in religion, or the evidence of a man's having had what they deem to be a miraculous *work of grace* upon his ſoul; ſo that they can have reaſon to think that he is one of the *elect*, and that he will not fall away. And on this account many Diſſenters have *days of preparation* for receiving the Lord's ſupper, and they do not conſider any perſon to be properly qualified to adminiſter either this ordinance, or baptiſm, till he has been regularly ordained, though they have no objection to his preaching all his life, if he pleaſes, without that ceremony, or to attending upon his miniſtry in all other reſpects.

It can alſo be from nothing but the remains of ſuperſtition, that the number of communicants, even among the moſt liberal of the Diſſenters, is very ſmall, ſeldom exceeding one in ten of the congregation; and very few as yet bring their children

children to communion. On this ſubject Mr. Pierce wrote a very valuable tract, which has led many perſons to think favourably of the practice, as the only effectual method of ſecuring the attendance of chriſtians in general, when they are grown up.

I would only adviſe the deferring of communion till the children be of a proper age to be brought to attend other parts of public worſhip, and till they can be made to join in the celebration with decency, ſo as to give no offence to others. This being a part of public worſhip, there cannot, I think, be any reaſon for making them communicate at an earlier age; and to make them do it at any period before it be properly an act of their own, will equally ſecure their attendance afterwards, which is the object to be aimed at. It is having had no particular fixed time for *beginning* to communicate, that has been the reaſon of its being ſo generally neglected as it has been with us. I flatter myſelf, however, that in due time, we ſhall think rationally on this, as well as on other ſubjects relating to chriſtianity, and that our practice will correſpond with our ſentiments.

THE

HISTORY

OF THE

Corruptions of Chriſtianity.

PART VII.

The Hiſtory of Opinions relating to BAPTISM.

THE INTRODUCTION.

THE rite of *baptiſm* was perhaps firſt practiſed by John, whoſe commiſſion from God, was to *baptize unto repentance* all who ſhould profeſs themſelves to be his diſciples. Our Saviour himſelf, was baptized, and probably all the apoſtles, who, by his directions, baptized others, even in his life time; and in his giving his commiſſion to them, he commanded them to *baptize*, as well as *diſciple* all nations. Accordingly we find, in the book of Acts, that all who were converted to chriſtianity, Jews as well as Gentiles, were received into the chriſtian church by baptiſm; and at that time this rite appears to have been gene-

rally, though probably not always, performed by dipping the whole body in water.

As this rite is uſually called the *baptiſm of repentance*, it was probably intended to repreſent the purity of heart and life which was required of all who profeſſed themſelves to be chriſtians; and therefore a declaration of faith in Chriſt, and alſo of repentance, was always made by thoſe who preſented themſelves to be baptiſed, at leaſt if it was required of them. Nothing more, therefore, ſeems to have been meant by baptiſm originally, than a ſolemn declaration of a man's being a chriſtian, and of his reſolution to live as becomes one; and very far was it from being imagined, that there was any peculiar virtue in the rite itſelf. It was conſidered as laying a man under obligation to a virtuous and holy life, as the profeſſion of chriſtianity neceſſarily does, but not of itſelf making any perſon holy.

It is certain, that in very early times, there is no particular mention made of any perſon being baptized by *ſprinkling* only, or a partial application of water to the body; but as on the other hand, the dipping of the whole body is not expreſsly preſcribed, and the *moral emblem* is the ſame, viz. that of *cleanneſs* or *purity*, produced by the uſe of water, we ſeem to be at liberty to apply the water either to the whole body, or to a part of it, as circumſtances ſhall make it convenient.

The

The Greek word βαπτίζω certainly does not always imply a dipping of the whole body in water. For it is applied to that kind of waſhing which the Phariſees required before eating. See Luke xi. 38. Mark vii. 4. We read in the ſame evangeliſt of the baptiſm not only of cups, pots, and brazen veſſels, but alſo of couches. Alſo, as in the Old Teſtament we often read of *ſprinkling* with water, as Num. xix. 13. 18. Ezek. xxxvi. 25. and it is referred to in the New, Heb. ix. 19. where we read, *And Moſes ſprinkled both the book of the Law, and all the people*; I think it moſt probable, that when great numbers were baptized at the ſame time, the water was applied in this manner, the practice being ſufficiently familiar to Jews.

In the three firſt centuries it was not uncommon to baptize perſons at the hour of death, and in this caſe they certainly did not dip the whole body. Epiphanius ſpeaks* of a Jewiſh patriarch being baptized by a chriſtian, who was introduced in the diſguiſe of a phyſician, on account of his being unwilling that his relations ſhould know it; and the water was brought by a ſervant, as if it had been for ſome other purpoſe. Whether the ſtory be true or falſe, it equally ſhews that the minds of chriſtians in that age, were not ſhocked at the idea of baptizing in a manner which muſt have been nearly as it is now uſed, and that ſuch

* Hær. xxx. Opera, vol. i. p. 128.

was deemed a ſufficient baptiſm. It is ſaid, indeed, by ſome*, that the Eunomians made this change in the rite of baptiſm; thinking it indecent to plunge perſons over-head in water, and eſpecially naked; and that they therefore only uncovered them as far as the breaſt, and then poured the water upon their heads. But as the Eunomians were a branch of the Arians, it is not probable that the catholics, as they were called, would adopt the cuſtom from them. Beſides, if the practice of *immerſion* had always been thought abſolutely neceſſary to baptiſm, it is not probable that the chriſtians of that age would have ever departed from it. As ſuperſtition increaſed, we ſhall have evidence enough, that they were more ready to *add* than to *diminiſh*, with reſpect to every thing that was of a ceremonial nature.

It has been much debated whether *infants* were conſidered as proper ſubjects for baptiſm in the primitive church. Now, beſides, that we are not able to trace the origin of infant baptiſm, and therefore are neceſſarily carried back into the age of the apoſtles for it, a controverſy aroſe pretty early in the chriſtian church, which would naturally have led ſome perſons to deny the antiquity of the practice, if they could; and conſidering the ſtate of opinions and practices with reſpect to things of a ſimilar nature, it is natural to ſup-

* See Jortin's Remarks, vol. ii. p. 282.

poſe

poſe that the primitive chriſtians would baptize infants as well as adult perſons.

With reſpect to this ſubject, I cannot think that writers have attended ſo much as they ought to have done to the power of a maſter of a family (the *patria poteſtas*) in the Eaſt, and particularly have not conſidered how far his own character and profeſſion uſually affected his wife, his children, and his ſervants, and indeed every thing that belonged to him. When the Ninevites repented, they made even their cattle to faſt, and wear ſackcloth, as well as themſelves; not that they could conſider their cattle as having any occaſion to repent, but they did it in order to expreſs, in a ſtronger manner, their own humiliation and contrition*.

Agreeably to theſe prevailing ideas, though circumciſion was a religious rite, inſtituted as a ſymbol of the covenant between God and the deſcendants of Abraham by Iſaac and Jacob, yet not only was Iſhmael circumciſed, but alſo all the ſlaves of Abraham, who had no intereſt whatever in the promiſes made to him. The application of this rite, therefore, to Iſhmael, and to the ſlaves of Abraham, was no more than a neceſſary appendage to the circumciſion of Abraham himſelf, as maſter of a family. It was *his own act* only,

* See Jonah iii. 7, 8.

and

and therefore the conſent of Iſhmael or of the ſlaves cannot be ſuppoſed to have been in the leaſt degree neceſſary. From the ſame fact we muſt alſo conclude that circumciſion, as ſuch, could not expreſs any intereſt that the ſubjects of it had in the things ſignified by it; for then Iſhmael and the ſlaves of Abraham would have had an equal intereſt in them.

There can be no doubt but that when the Jews in future ages made converts to their religion, they obliged every maſter of a family both to ſubmit to this rite himſelf, and likewiſe to ſee that all his houſhold, or all that depended upon him, did the ſame. For the ſame reaſon, whatever other rite had been enjoined them, and whatever it had expreſſed, the ſame people would, no doubt, have applied it in the ſame indiſcriminate manner to the maſter of the family, and to all his houſhold. It was natural therefore, for the apoſtles, and other Jews, on the inſtitution of baptiſm, to apply it to infants, as well as to adults, as a token of the profeſſion of chriſtianity by the maſter of the family only; and this they would do without conſidering it as a ſubſtitute for circumciſion, and ſucceeding in the place of it, which it is never ſaid to do in the ſcriptures, though ſome have been led by ſome circumſtances of reſemblance in the two rites to imagine that this was the caſe. According to the general ideas, and the eſtabliſhed cuſtom of the Jews and other Aſiatics,

Aſiatics, in ſimilar caſes, they would not have thought of adopting any other practice than that of infant baptiſm, without particular directions.

Accordingly, we find in the ſcriptures, that the jailor, on profeſſing his faith in Chriſt, was baptiſed, *he and all his*, Acts xvi. 33. and that Lydia was baptized and *all her houſhold*, Ver. 15. Now it is certain that to a Jew theſe phraſes would convey the idea of the children, at leaſt, if not of the domeſtic ſlaves, having been baptized, as well as the head of the family. A Roman alſo could not have underſtood them to imply leſs than all who were ſubject to what was called the *patria poteſtas*.

It alſo appears to me to be very evident from eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, and the writings of the chriſtian Fathers, that infant baptiſm was the uniform practice of the primitive chriſtians, and continued to be ſo till along with other ſuperſtitious notions, they got the idea of the efficacy of baptiſm *as ſuch* to waſh away ſins, and conſequently of the peculiar ſafety of dying preſently after they were baptized, before any freſh guilt could be contracted. Now an argument derived from the uniform practice of the primitive chriſtians, cannot but be allowed to have conſiderable weight, as an evidence of its having been a practice of the apoſtolical times, and having the ſanction of apoſtolical authority. It is from the evidence of tradition only,

only, deduced from the uninterrupted practice the chriſtian churches, that we now ſet apart n the ſeventh but the firſt day of the week, for tl purpoſe of public worſhip. There is no expre authority for this in the new Teſtament.

Tertullian indeed, adviſes to defer baptiſ till perſons be of age to be chriſtians, leſt it ſhou bring their ſponſers into danger; alledging alſo that their innocent age had no need to haſten the remiſſion of ſins. But he no where inſinuat that infant baptiſm was not even the univerſ cuſtom of his time, or that it had been an *inn vation*; which, in pleading againſt it, he mig naturally have been expected to inſiſt upon. H was only offended at the too great readineſs wi which all perſons were admitted to baptiſ when ſome of them were afterwards a diſgrace their profeſſion. He therefore adviſes to def it *in all caſes*, and in that of infants alſo.

If we trace the progreſs of this affair, a litt farther, we ſhall find that when, by the prevalen of the liberal ſentiments of chriſtianity, more a count was made of *ſlaves*, as being of the ſam ſpecies with their maſters, and equally intereſte with them in the privileges and promiſes of th goſpel, and eſpecially when, in conſequence this, they acquired more civil rights, and wer allowed to act for themſelves more than they ha

* De Baptiſmo, ſect. 18. Opera, p. 231.

don

done, they were conſidered as having religious intereſts of their own. Indeed, in the time of the Romans, ſlaves, being of different nations, were allowed (agreeably to the genius of the pagan ſyſtem) to practiſe ſome of their peculiar religious rites; and a great many of the firſt chriſtian converts were ſlaves; their maſters, at that time, not finding themſelves or their intereſt affected by it, and therefore not taking any umbrage at it.

It happened, alſo, that the power of a father over his children was much leſs in theſe northern nations of Europe, than it was in the Eaſt, or among the Romans, with whom, likewiſe, it ſenſibly declined. On this account, and alſo becauſe, from the very firſt promulgation of chriſtianity it could not but be manifeſt, that perſons were intereſted in it, as *individuals*, and not as members of families, or ſocieties, I make no doubt, but that, in general, if there were adult children or ſlaves in a family, at the time that the maſter profeſſed himſelf a chriſtian, they were not baptized without their own conſent; but no conſideration, that can be ſuppoſed to have occurred either to Jews or Romans, could have led them to make the ſame exception in favour of infants.

Conſidering how very different are the ideas and cuſtoms of theſe times, and theſe parts of the world, from thoſe which prevailed among the Jews, when baptiſm was inſtituted, the peculiar reaſons

reaſons for applying it to infants have, in a great meaſure, ceaſed. But ſtill, as the practice is of apoſtolical authority, it appears to me, that no innovation ought to be made in it by any power whatever; but that we ought rather to preſerve thoſe ideas which originally gave a propriety to it, eſpecially when there is nothing unnatural in them. For my own part, I endeavour to adhere to the primitive ideas above-mentioned, and therefore I conſider the baptizing of my children, not as directly implying that they have any intereſt in it, or in the things ſignified by it, but as a part of my own profeſſion of chriſtianity, and conſequently as an obligation, which, as ſuch, I am under, to educate my children, and alſo to inſtruct my ſervants, in the principles of the chriſtian religion. In this view of the ordinance of baptiſm, infants are indirectly intereſted in it, whether they adhere to the profeſſion of chriſtianity, and thereby ſecure the bleſſings of it when they become adults, ſo as to think and act for themſelves, or not.

It is poſſible, that, at this time, and in theſe parts of the world, we may not ſee ſo much reaſon for any *poſitive inſtitutions*; but with the Jews, and indeed throughout all the Eaſt, nothing is more common than to expreſs ſentiments and purpoſes by appropriated actions. Now waſhing with water ſo naturally expreſſes purity of heart, and is a thing ſo agreeable in itſelf, eſpecially in hot countries, that we cannot wonder it ſhould be

be made choice of to denote the profeſſion of a religion which brings men under the ſtricteſt obligations to repent and reform their lives; and particularly that John the Baptiſt, whoſe immediate buſineſs it was to preach repentance, ſhould be directed to enjoin it.

Whether baptiſm be of earlier antiquity than John the Baptiſt, I have not been able to ſatisfy myſelf. Maimonides, and the earlieſt Jewiſh writers, ſpeak of ſolemn baptiſm as a neceſſary attendant on circumciſion, whenever any new converts were made to their religion, and alſo as a practice that was immemorial among them. But whether it was tacitly implied in the original inſtitution of circumciſion, or whether it had been adopted afterwards, as naturally expreſſive of the new converts cleanſing themſelves from the impurities of their former ſtate of heatheniſm, it was probably the cuſtom of the Jews in the time of our Saviour.

If this was the caſe, and the Jews did both circumciſe and baptize all that were capable of it, when families were converted to their religion, there was both the leſs reaſon for explaining the nature and the uſe of the rite on the firſt mention of it, or for deſcribing more particularly than has been done, who were the proper ſubjects of baptiſm. And we may rather ſuppoſe that our Lord would have expreſsly reſtricted the application

application of it to adult perſons, if he had intended that the prevailing cuſtom ſhould be altered. Conſequently, when a maſter of a family was converted to chriſtianity, he would, of courſe, be required to baptize all his houſhold, and conſider himſelf as bound to inſtruct them in the principles of the religion that he profeſſed.

If any controverſy was ever calculated to bring a fact of this nature to light, it was that of Pelagius and Auſtin about original ſin, in which the latter maintained that baptiſm was neceſſary to waſh it away; the ſecond ſpiritual birth counteracting the effects of the firſt carnal birth. Now the utmoſt that Pelagius appears to have replied on this ſubject was, that infant baptiſm was not neceſſary. But he did not pretend to ſay that the practice was not then univerſal, or that it had not always been ſo. Nay Auſtin ſays*, that it was agreed between him and his opponent, that infants ought to be baptized, and that they differed only about the reaſon why they were to be baptized.

We alſo find no trace of its being thought that the baptiſm of either the maſter of a family, or of his houſhold, on their firſt profeſſion of chriſtianity, might ſuffice for their deſcendants; and though the Jews did not repeat that baptiſm which accompanied circumciſion, yet the circumciſion itſelf was repeated on every male, ſo that

* De Verbis Apoſtoli Sermo, xiii. Opera, vol. x. p. 318.

if

if the chriſtians in the primitive times had been influenced by any *analogies* between the Jewiſh religion and their own, they would rather have been led to repeat the rite of baptiſm with reſpect to their children, than to diſcontinue it.

Laſtly, I am not able to interpret 1 Cor. vii. 14, *The unbelieving huſband is ſanctified by the wife, or elſe were the children unclean, but now they are holy*, more naturally than by ſuppoſing, that as by *holy* the Jews meant *devoted to God*, ſo by *a child being holy*, they meant that it had a right to the ceremonies of their holy religion. As therefore a child born of one Jewiſh parent had a right to circumciſion, ſo a child born of one chriſtian parent had a right to baptiſm. Indeed, I do not ſee what other rational meaning can be aſſigned to the *holineſs of a child.*

It is remarkable that the chriſtians in Abyſſinia repeat their baptiſm annually, on the feſtival of Epiphany *.

* Geddes's Church Hiſtory of Ethiopia, p. 33.

SECTION I.

Of the Opinions and Practices of the Chriſtians relating to Baptiſm till the Reformation.

THERE is this difference with reſpect to the corruptions of the rite of baptiſm, and thoſe of the Lord's ſupper, that though they both began about the ſame time and thoſe relating to baptiſm were perhaps the earlier of the two, and the progreſs of ſuperſtition in conſequence of this corruption, was rather more rapid in the firſt century of chriſtianity, it was by no means ſo afterwards. For after the time of thoſe who are more properly called *Fathers*, we find no material alteration in the rite of baptiſm itſelf (though the buſineſs of *confirmation* grew out of it) whereas we have ſeen the moſt material additions were made to the doctrine of the euchariſt ſo late as the ninth century.

In the age immediately following that of the apoſtles, we find that *baptiſm* and *regeneration* were uſed as ſynonymous terms; and whereas, originally, the pardon of ſin was ſuppoſed to be the conſequence of that reformation of life which was only *promiſed* at baptiſm, it was now imagined that there was ſomething in the *rite itſelf*, to which that grace was annexed; and in general it ſeems

ſeems to have been imagined that this *ſanctifying virtue* was in the *water*, and in no other part of the ordinance as adminiſtered by the prieſt.

Tertullian ſays, that the holy ſpirit was always given in baptiſm; and yet he expreſsly denied that it was beſtowed by the laying on of hands. This writer ſays farther, that the ſpirit of God deſcends upon the water of baptiſm, like a dove. Cyprian adds that the adorable Trinity is ineffably in baptiſm. Paulinus ſays, that the water conceives and contains God; Chryſoſtom, that the water ceaſes to be what it was before, and is nor fit for drinking, but is proper for ſanctifying. He ſays*, that the chriſtian baptiſm is ſuperior to that of John, in that his was the *baptiſm of repentance*, but had not the power of *forgiving ſin*. And Auſtin adds, that it touches the body and purifies the heart†.

Chriſtians having now got the idea that baptiſm waſhed away ſin, a field was opened for much ſeducing eloquence on the ſubject, which could not fail to confirm and increaſe the prevailing ſuperſtition. Chryſoſtom, ſpeaking of baptiſm, ſays, "When you are come to the bed "of the holy ſpirit, to the portico of grace, to the "dreadful and deſirable bath, throw yourſelves "upon the ground, as priſoners before a king‡."

* Hom. xxiv. Opera, vol. i. p. 312.
† Baſnage Hiſtoire des Egliſes Reformées, vol. i. p. 138.
‡ Baſnage, vol. i. p. 139.

Superſtitious practices, ſimilar to thoſe which followed the corruption of the doctrine of the euchariſt, did not fail to accompany this undue reverence for the water of baptiſm. We find that in the third century the noviciates returned from baptiſm adorned with crowns, and cloathed with white garments in token of their victory over ſin and the world. If they ſcrupled eating before they received the euchariſt, they made a greater ſcruple of waſhing after baptiſm. They would not do it till the end of the week; and immediately after baptiſm they wiped the bodies of the catechumens leſt a drop of the ſacramental water ſhould fall to the ground. They went to church on the Sunday to put off their white garments, and to receive what was called the *ablution.*

It was even believed that a miracle was wrought on the water that was drawn on the day of Epiphany, becauſe Jeſus Chriſt had been baptized at that time. They carried it with reſpect to their houſes after it had been conſecrated; it was kept with care, and Chryſoſtom ſaid that it would keep ſweet many years *. This water was even given inſtead of the euchariſt to penitents who were not entirely reconciled to the church; and Auſtin ſays the catechumens among other means are ſanctified by it. "The water," he ſays, "is holy, though it be not the body of

* Hom. xxiv. Op. vol. i. p. 311.

"Chriſt.

"Chriſt. It is more holy than the other aliments, "becauſe it is a ſacrament." He ſays, at the ſame time, that the catechumens are ſanctified by the ſign of the croſs, and by the impoſition of hands, which had alſo been made appendages of baptiſm at that time *. It appears by a paſſage in Auſtin, that the African chriſtians uſually called baptiſm *ſalvation*, and the euchariſt *life*, preferring the former to the latter.

When once it was imagined that a perſon newly baptized was cleanſed from all ſin, it is no wonder that many perſons deferred this ſanctifying rite as long as poſſible, even till they apprehended that they were at the point of death. We find caſes of this kind at the beginning of the third century. Conſtantine the Great, was not baptized till he was at the laſt gaſp, and in this he was followed by his ſon Conſtantius; and two of his other ſons Conſtantine and Conſtans, were killed before they were baptized.

When baptiſm was adminiſtered to perſons near the point of death, the patient muſt generally have been in bed, and conſequently the ceremony could not have been performed by *immerſion*; and it appears in the hiſtory of Novatian that this was actually the caſe. On theſe occaſions, the *unction*, and other ceremonies which had been

* De Pecatorum Meritis, lib. iv. cap. xxvi. Opera, vol. vii. p. 711.

added to the ſimple rite of baptiſm, were omitted; but they were performed afterwards, if the ſick perſon recovered. We even find that, rather than omit baptiſm entirely, it was uſual to baptize perſons who were actually dead. Epiphanius, Chryſoſtom, and Theodorit, obſerve that this cuſtom prevailed in ſome places in their time *.

After the age of Juſtin Martyr we find many additions made to the rite of baptiſm. It was then the cuſtom to give the perſon baptized milk and honey, and to abſtain from waſhing all the remainder of the day, for which Tertullian ſays they had no authority from the ſcripture, but only from tradition. They alſo added *unction* and the *impoſition of hands*; the unction probably, referring, in a ſymbolical manner, to their preparation for a ſpiritual combat; and in applying the oil the prieſt touched the head or the forehead in the form of a croſs. Tertullian is the firſt who mentions the *ſigning with the ſign of the croſs*, but only as uſed in private, and not in public worſhip; and he particularly deſcribes the cuſtom of baptizing without mentioning it. Indeed, it does not appear to have been uſed in baptiſm till the latter end of the fourth or fifth century; but then we find great virtue aſcribed to it. Lactantius, who lived in the beginning of the fourth century, ſays, the devil cannot approach thoſe who have

* Baſnage, vol. i. p. 137.

the

the heavenly mark of the croſs upon them, as an impregnable fortreſs to defend them*; but he does not ſay it was uſed in baptiſm.

After the council of Nice chriſtians added to baptiſm the ceremonies of *exorciſm*, and adjurations, to make evil ſpirits depart from the perſons to be baptized. They made ſeveral ſignings with the croſs, they uſed to light candles, they gave ſalt to the baptized perſons to taſte, and the prieſt touched his mouth and ears with ſpittle, and alſo blew and ſpit upon his face, At that time alſo baptized perſons were made to wear white garments till the Sunday following, as was mentioned above. They had alſo various other ceremonies, ſome of which are now aboliſhed, though others of them remain in the church of Rome to this day. Blowing in the face, putting ſalt in the mouth, giving milk and honey, and alſo kiſſing the baptized perſons, and making them abſtain for ſome time from wine, are now no longer in uſe. The reaſon of theſe ceremonies may be pretty eaſily conceived. I ſhall, therefore only obſerve, that the *ſalt* was uſed as a ſymbol of purity and wiſdom; and that exorciſm took its riſe from the Platonic notion that evil dæmons hovered over human ſouls, ſeducing them to ſin.

In a decree of the council of Laodicea, held in the year 364, mention is made of *two anoint-*

* Inſt. lib. iv. cap. xxvii. p. 439.

ings, one with ſimple oil before baptiſm, and the other with ointment (μυρω) after baptiſm; and it is there expreſſed, that the firſt unction was for the participation of the holy ſpirit, that the water was a ſymbol of death, and that the ointment, which was applied with the ſign of the croſs, was for the ſeal of the covenant*. This latter unction we ſhall find was afterwards reſerved for the biſhops, and became the ſubject of a diſtinct ſacrament in the church of Rome, called *Confirmation*.

Originally the biſhop only, or the prieſts by his permiſſion, adminiſtered baptiſm; as, with his leave, they alſo performed any other of his functions; but it appears from Tertullian that, in his time, laymen had, in ſome caſes, the power of baptizing. This baptiſm, however, we may be aſſured, required the confirmation of the biſhop, and would not be allowed but in caſes of neceſſity, as at the ſeeming approach of death, &c. At the ſynod at Elvira, in 306, it was allowed that a layman, provided he had not been married a ſecond time, mignt baptize catechumens in caſe of neceſſity; but it was ordered that, if they ſurvived, they ſhould be brought to the biſhop for the impoſition of hands. Afterwards, when the bounds of the church were much enlarged, the buſineſs of baptizing was left alſo entirely to the prieſts, or the

* Sueur, A. D. 364.

country

country biſhops, and the biſhops of great ſees only *confirmed* afterwards.

Great doubts were raiſed in early times about the validity of baptiſm as adminiſtered by heretics. Tertullian, before he became a Montaniſt, wrote a treatiſe to prove that heretics, not having the ſame God, or the ſame Chriſt, with the orthodox, their baptiſm was not valid. Cyprian called a ſynod at Carthage, in which it was determined, that no baptiſm was valid out of the catholic church, and therefore, that thoſe who had been heretics ſhould be re-baptized. But Stephen, the biſhop of Rome, did not approve of this deciſion, and by degrees his opinion, which continued to be that of the church of Rome, became every where prevalent. Indeed when ſo much ſtreſs was laid upon baptiſm itſelf, it would have introduced endleſs anxiety if much doubt had remained about the power of adminiſtering it.

Having given this account of the corruption of the doctrine of baptiſm, and the principal abuſes and ſuperſtitions with reſpect to the practices of it, I ſhall go over what farther relates to the ſubject according to the order of adminiſtration.

When chriſtians from a fondneſs for the rites and ceremonies of paganiſm, and a deſire to engage the reſpect of their heathen acquaintance

for the religion which they had embraced, began to adopt ſome of the maxims and rites of their old religion, they ſeem to have been more particularly ſtruck with what related to the *myſteries*, or the more ſacred rites of the pagan religion, to which only few perſons were admitted, and thoſe under a ſolemn oath of ſecrecy. In conſequence of this diſpoſition, both the poſitive inſtitutions of chriſtianity, *Baptiſm* and the *Lord's ſupper*, were converted into myſteries, chriſtians affecting great ſecrecy with reſpect to the mode of adminiſtering them, and no perſon could then be admitted to attend the whole of the public worſhip before he was baptized; but all who were claſſed with the *Catechumens* were diſmiſſed before the celebration of the euchariſt, which cloſed the ſervice.

Farther, thoſe who were admitted to the heathen myſteries had certain *ſigns* or *ſymbols*, delivered to them, by which they might know each other, ſo that by declaring them they might be admitted into any temple and to the ſecret worſhip and rites of that God whoſe ſymbols they had received. In imitation of this, it occurred to the chriſtians to make a ſimilar uſe of the *Apoſtles creed*, or that ſhort declaration of faith which it had been uſual to require of perſons before they were baptized. This creed, therefore, (which does not appear to have been publiſhed, and indeed was altered from time to time, as particular

particular hereſies aroſe in the church) they now began to call a *ſymbol*, affecting to conceal it from the pagans, and not revealing it even to the catechumens themſelves, except juſt before they were baptized; and then it was delivered to them as a ſymbol by which they were to know one another.

Cyprian ſays, that *the ſacrament of faith*, that is *the creed*, was not to be prophaned or divulged, for which he cites two texts, the one Proverbs xxiii. 9, *Speak not in the ears of a fool, for he will deſpiſe the wiſdom of thy word*; and the other, Matthew vii. 6, *Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither caſt ye your pearls before ſwine, &c.* Ambroſe moſt pathetically exhorts to the utmoſt vigilance, to conceal the chriſtian myſteries, and in particular to be very careful not by incauteouſneſs to reveal the ſecrets of the *creed* or the *Lord's prayer*. This laſt appears very extraordinary, as the Lord's prayer is contained in the goſpels, where it might be ſeen by any perſon*.

In the ſecond century baptiſm was performed publicly only twice in the year, viz. on Eaſter and Whit-ſunday. In the ſame age *ſponſers* or *Godfathers*, were introduced to anſwer for adult perſons, though they were afterwards admitted in the baptiſm of infants †. This, Mr. Daille ſays, was not done till the fourth century.

* Hiſt. of the Apoſtles Creed, p. 20. † Moſheim, vol i. p. 172.

It

It ſhould ſeem from the Acts of the apoſtles, that it was ſufficient to the ceremony of baptiſm, to ſay *I baptize into the name of Jeſus Chriſt*. But we ſoon find that the form of words uſed, Matthew xxviii. 19. was ſtrictly adhered to, at leaſt in the third century, viz. *I baptize thee in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt*. It appears, however, that at the time of Juſtin Martyr, they did not always confine themſelves to theſe particular words, but ſometimes added others by way of explanation. For though theſe preciſe words occur in one account of baptiſm by this writer*; in another he ſpeaks of baptiſm, "Into the name of Jeſus Chriſt, who was cru-"cified by Pontius Pilate, and into the name "of the holy Spirit, who foretold by the holy "prophets every thing relating to Chriſt†:" But perhaps this explanation might be only intended for the uſe of his readers, and not given by him, as a form of words that was uſed in the adminiſtration of baptiſm itſelf.

We find very little mention made of baptiſm, from the time of thoſe who were generally called *Fathers*, that is from the age of Auſtin, to the reformation. Indeed I have hardly met with any thing on the ſubject worth reciting.

It ſoon became a maxim, that as baptiſm was a ſacrament that was to be uſed only *once*,

* Edit. Thirlby, p. 89. † Ib. p. 91.

it

it was exceedingly wrong to *rebaptize* any perſon; and it is pleaſant to obſerve the precaution that pope Boniface hit upon to prevent this in dubious caſes. In his ſtatutes or inſtructions he ſays, "They whoſe baptiſm is dubious, ought "without ſcruple to be baptized, with this pro-"teſtation, *I do not rebaptize thee, but if thou art "not baptized, I baptize thee &c.*" This is the firſt example that I have found of *conditional baptiſm* *.

From the earlieſt account of the ordinance, we find that children received the Lord's ſupper, and that baptiſm always preceded communion. In a book of divine offices, written as ſome think in the eleventh century, it is ordained that care be taken that young children receive no food after baptiſm, and that they do not even give them ſuck without neceſſity, till after they have participated of the body of Chriſt †.

* Jortin's Remarks, vol. iv. p. 462. † Larroche, p. 129.

SECTION

SECTION II.

The State of Opinions concerning Baptiſm, ſince the Reformation.

IT is remarkable that though the Waldenſes always practiſed infant baptiſm*, many of the Albigenſes, if not all of them, held that baptiſm ought to be confined to adults. This was the opinion of the Petrobuſſians†, and alſo of Berenger‡.

Wickliffe thought baptiſm to be neceſſary to ſalvation. "The prieſt," he ſays, "in baptiſm "adminiſters only the token or ſign, but God, "who is the prieſt and biſhop of our ſouls, ad- "miniſters the ſpiritual grace§." And Luther not only retained the rite of baptiſm, but even the ceremony of *exorciſm*. At leaſt, this was retained in the greateſt part of the Lutheran churches‖.

It appeared, however, preſently after the reformation by Luther, that great numbers had been well prepared to follow him, and even to go farther than he did. Very many had been ſo much ſcandalized with the abuſes of baptiſm, and

* Leger's Hiſtoire, p. 65.
† Baſnage, vol. ii. p. 140.
‡ Fleury, A. D. 1050.
§ Gilpin's Life of him, p. 64.
‖ Moſheim, vol. iv. 58,

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the Lord's ſupper eſpecially, as to reject them, either in whole, or in part. The baptiſm of infants was very generally thought to be irrational, and therefore it was adminiſtered only to adults. Moſt of thoſe who rejected the doctrine of the divinity of Chriſt, were of this perſuaſion, as was Socinus himſelf. Indeed, he and ſome others, thought that the rite of baptiſm was only to be uſed when perſons were converted to chriſtianity from ſome other religion, and was not to be applied to any who were born of chriſtian parents, it does not appear, however, that thoſe who held this opinion ever formed a ſeparate ſect, or that their numbers were conſiderable; but thoſe who rejected infant baptiſm were then, and ſtill are, very numerous.

It happened that many of thoſe who held this opinion entertained ſome very wild notions, eſpecially that of the reign of Chriſt, or of the ſaints, upon earth, independent of any ſecular power; and they made an attempt to ſet up a monarchy of this kind at Munſter in Weſtphalia, which they ſeized upon for that purpoſe in the year 1534. But an end was ſoon put to this deluſion, and an odium very unjuſtly remained upon all thoſe who retained nothing but their doctrine concerning baptiſm. At preſent thoſe who are called, *Baptiſts* are as peaceable as any other chriſtians. In Holland they are called *Mennonites*, from Menno, a very conſiderable perſon among them; and

theſe

theſe have adopted the pacific doctrines of the Quakers in England. In this country the Baptiſts are very numerous. The greateſt part of them are called *particular Baptiſts*, from their holding the doctrine of particular election; but there are a few ſocieties of them who are called *general Baptiſts*, from their holding the doctrine of general redemption.

The church of England retains the baptiſm of infants, and alſo the uſe of the ſign of the croſs, and of godfathers. It alſo admits of baptiſm by women, a cuſtom derived from the opinion of the indiſpenſible neceſſity of baptiſm to ſalvation. "We do not," ſays biſhop Burnet, "annul this "cuſtom, though we condemn it." And indeed it is the language of the public forms of the church of England, that baptiſm is neceſſary to ſalvation. In the thirty-nine articles we find the doctrine of an inviſible work of God accompanying baptiſm, as well as the Lord's ſupper; and in the church catechiſm it is ſaid that by baptiſm a perſon becomes *a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.*

The doctrine of the church of Scotland is of a piece with this. For baptiſm is ſaid, in their confeſſion of faith, to be "a ſign or ſeal of the "covenant of grace, of perſons ingrafting into "Chriſt, of regeneration, of remiſſion of ſins, &c." But the efficacy of baptiſm is there ſaid not to be "tied

"tied to that moment of time wherein it is ad-
"miniſtered; yet notwithſtanding by the right uſe
"of this ordinance, the grace promiſed is not only
"offered, but really exhibited and conferred, by
"the Holy Ghoſt, to ſuch, whether of age or
"infants, as that grace belongs to, according to
"the council of God's own will, in his appointed
"time."

The Diſſenters of the Calviniſtic perſuaſion in England, may poſſibly retain the opinion of ſome ſpiritual grace accompanying baptiſm, though I rather think it is not at preſent held by them. Nothing, however, of it is retained by thoſe who are called *rational Diſſenters*. They conſider the baptiſm of adult perſons as the mode of taking upon them the chriſtian profeſſion; and that when it is applied to infants, an obligation is acknowledged by the parents to educate their children in the principles of the chriſtian religion. Many of them lay ſo little ſtreſs upon it, that I imagine they would make no great difficulty of deferring it to adult age, or indeed of omitting it intirely in chriſtian families; but they do not think it of importance enough to make any new ſect in the chriſtian church on account of it, or to act otherwiſe than their anceſtors have done before them, in a matter of ſo great indifference. The Quakers make no uſe either of this rite, or of the Lord's ſupper.

AN

APPENDIX

TO

PARTS VI. AND VII.

CONTAINING

The Hiſtory of the other Sacraments beſides Baptiſm and the Lord's Supper.

AFTER it was imagined that there was ſome *divine virtue* accompanying the adminiſtration of baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper, and theſe two rites had obtained the name of *ſacraments*, which only prieſts regularly ordained had the power of adminiſtering with effect; other things, by degrees, obtained the ſame name; ſome ſpiritual grace being ſuppoſed to accompany them, and this contributed to extend the power and enlarge the province of the prieſthood. At length *five* other ceremonies, beſides baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper came to be ranked in the ſame claſs with them.

Peter Lombard, in the twelfth century, is the firſt who mentions *ſeven ſacraments*. It is ſuppoſed that from the expreſſion of the *ſeven ſpirits of God*, in the book of the Revelations, there came to be

a notion of the ſeven-fold operation of the ſpirit. But whether this was the true origin of *ſeven* ſacraments, in preference to any other number, or whether it was uſed as an argument in ſupport of an opinion already formed, I have not found; nor indeed is the matter of importance enough to make much enquiry about it. Eugenius is the firſt pope who mentions theſe ſeven ſacraments, in his *inſtructions to the Armenians*, which is publiſhed along with the dercees of the council of Florence; and the whole doctrine concerning them was finally ſettled by the council of Trent*.

The five additional ſacraments are, *confirmation*, *penance*, *holy orders*, *matrimony*, and *extreme unction*. It is, however, with great difficulty that the papiſts bring all theſe things within the deſcription of a *ſacrament*; as they ſay that in order to conſtitute one, there muſt be ſome *matter*, correſponding to water in baptiſm, and bread and wine in the Lord's ſupper (which were a pattern for the reſt) and alſo a *ſet form of words*, correſponding to *I baptize thee in the name of the Father*, &c. for baptiſm, and to the words, *This is my body*, for the Lord's ſupper. The *inward and ſpiritual grace* was ſome divine influence which they ſuppoſed to follow the due application of this matter of the ſacraments, and the proper words accompanying the adminiſtration of them.

* Burnet on the Articles, p. 335.

I ſhall

I ſhall give a general account of all theſe different ſacraments, though the ſubjects of ſome of them will be treated more fully in other places of this work.

From the *ſecond unction*, which was originally an appendage to the rite of baptiſm, another diſtinct ſacrament was made, and called *confirmation*.

The church of Rome, in the time of pope Sylveſter, had two unctions of *chriſm* (a compoſition of olive oil, and balm, *opobalſamum*) one on the breaſt, by the prieſt, and the other on the forehead by the biſhop. But, from the time of Gregory III. the prieſts had been allowed to anoint on the forehead, and Honoré of Autun, a writer of the twelfth century, informs us that after the prieſt had anointed the head, it was covered with a mitre, which was worn eight days, at the end of which it was taken off, and then the biſhop anointed the forehead with the chriſm. From this time the church of Rome, ſeeing that the unction of the biſhop was different from that of the prieſt, and performed at a different time, made of it a ſacrament diſtinct from baptiſm, and called it *confirmation*, which can only be adminiſtered by the biſhop. The firſt expreſs inſtitution of this ſacrament is in the decree of pope Eugenius, in 1439, in which he ſays, "the ſecond ſacrament "is confirmation, the matter of which is chriſm "bleſſed by the biſhop, and though the prieſt

" may give the other unction, the biſhop only " can conſer this*."

In adminiſtering confirmation in the church of Rome, the biſhop applies the chriſm to the forehead, pronouncing theſe words, " I ſign thee with " the ſign of the croſs, and confirm thee with the " anointing of ſalvation, in the name of the Fa- " ther, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt†."

In the church of England the rite of confirmation is preſerved, though it is not held to be a ſacrament. Alſo the uſe of chriſm is omitted, but the ceremony can only be performed by the biſhop, who puts his hand upon the head of the perſons to be confirmed, and prays for the influence of the Holy Spirit upon them, ſaying, " We have now laid on our hands to certify them " by this ſign, of thy favour, and gracious good- " neſs."

This is evidently a remainder of the popiſh ſacrament of confirmation. But there is no more authority for this remainder, than for any thing that is omitted in the ceremony. Biſhop Burnet, and other advocates for the doctrine and diſcipline of the church of England, allege in favour of it the conduct of the apoſtles, who put their hands upon the heads of thoſe who had been converted and baptized, and thereby imparted to them the

* Sueur, A. D. 416. † Burnet on the Articles, p. 336.

gift

gift of the Holy Spirit, or a power of working miracles. But, beſides that no ſuch power is now pretended to be conferred, this impoſition of hands was the province of the apoſtles only, and not that of a biſhop. This cuſtom of reſerving the impoſition of hands after baptiſm, to be performed by the biſhop alone, ſeems to have been begun in the time of Jerom, but he himſelf did not think that the Holy Spirit was given by the impoſition of the hands of the biſhop only; and he ſays, they are not to be lamented, who, being baptized by preſbyters or deacons, in little villages, and caſtles, have died before they were viſited by biſhops. Hilary ſays that preſbyters confirmed in Egypt, if the biſhop was not preſent. The ſame alſo was determined by the council of Orange*.

The origin of *penance*, which is a ſecond additional ſacrament now enjoined by the church of Rome, will be examined in its proper place. It is now conſidered as a ſacrament, in conſequence of the *confeſſion* and the *penance* that is enjoined, being together the *matter* of the ſacrament; and the words of the prieſt, *I abſolve thee from thy ſins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt*, is the *form* of it. After this, the *ſpiritual grace*, or the remiſſion of ſins, is held to be conferred. The mention of theſe things at this day, is a ſufficient expoſing of them.

* Pierce's Vindication, p. 474.

The church of England retains ſomething of this ſacrament alſo, though without the name of one. For, in the rules of confeſſing the ſick, the prieſt is directed in certain caſes to pronounce an *abſolution*; and in the daily prayers of the church, after the confeſſion which begins the ſervice, ſomething like abſolution is pronounced. In this the compilers of the Engliſh liturgy followed the method of the popiſh ſervice; and at the time of the reformation it might ſerve to make the more ignorant of the people believe that, notwithſtanding a change in other reſpects, the ſame things *in ſubſtance* were to be had in both the communions.

The next ſacrament is *holy orders*, the matter of which is the *delivery of the veſſels*, uſed in the celebration of the euchariſt, from the biſhop to the prieſt, giving him a power "to offer ſacri-"fices to God, and to celebrate maſſes for the "living and the dead," adding, as in all the other ſacraments *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt.* This ceremony was not uſed till after the twelfth century, but then this ſacrament of *Orders* was held to be a thing diſtinct from the office of *Prieſthood* in general, which is ſaid to be conferred by the biſhop, pronouncing theſe words, *Receive the Holy Ghoſt. Whoſe ſins ye remit, they are remitted, and whoſe ſins ye retain, they are retained.* The impoſition of hands by the biſhops and preſbyters is alſo kept up among the catholics; but it is not performed,

as

formerly, during the pronouncing of any prayer, ſo that it is become a mere dumb ſhew. The prayer which accompanied the ceremony of impoſition of hands, is indeed ſtill uſed, but not during the impoſition.

In conſequence of this new ſacrament, the catholics now ſay, that their prieſts have two kinds of power, viz. that of *conſecrating*, and that of *abſolving*; that they are ordained to the one by the laying on of the hands of the biſhop, when he ſays, *Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt*, and to the other by the delivery of the veſſels; and they make the biſhop and the prieſt laying on their hands jointly, to be only their declaring, by way of ſuffrage, that ſuch a perſon ought to be ordained*.

The third ſacrament peculiar to the church of Rome, is *matrimony*, the *inward conſent of the parties* being ſuppoſed to be the *matter* of it, and the *form* is, the prieſt ſolemnly declaring them to be man and wife, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt. But if the inward conſent of the parties be neceſſary to marriage, as a ſacrament, there muſt be great uncertainty in it. One conſiderable inconvenience that reſulted from making marrriage a ſacrament was, that the bond was held to be indiſſoluble. In conſequence of this, a ſentence of divorce in the eccleſiaſtical

* Burnet on the Articles, p. 354, &c.

court, is only what is called with us, *a divorce a menſa et thoro*, but does not impower the parties to marry again, which is a kind of divorce unknown in any age or country before. The innocent perſon, however, was allowed to marry again by the popes Gregory and Zachary, and even in a ſynod held at Rome in the tenth century. The doctrine of the abſolute indiſſolubility of marriage, even for adultery, was not finally ſettled till the council of Trent*.

The laſt additional ſacrament of the church of Rome, is *extreme unction*, ſo called from its being uſed only on the near approach of death. The form of this ſacrament, they ſay, is the application of olive oil, bleſſed by the biſhop, to all the five ſenſes, uſing theſe words "By this ſacred "unction may God grant thee his mercy in what-"ſoever thou haſt offended, by ſight, hearing, "ſmelling, taſting, and touching;" the prieſt applying the oil to each of the ſenſes, as he pronounces the name of it.

The firſt mention that is made of this ceremony is by pope Innocent. Sacred oil, indeed, was held in great veneration ſo early as the fourth century, and eſteemed as an univerſal remedy, for which purpoſe it was either prepared and diſpenſed by prieſts and monks, or was taken from

* Burnet on the Articles, p. 360.

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the lamps which were kept burning before the relics of the martyrs. But in none of the lives of the ſaints before the ninth century, is there any mention made of their receiving extreme unction, though their deaths are ſometimes particularly related, and their receiving the euchariſt is often mentioned. But from the ſeventh century to the twelfth, they began to uſe this anointing of the ſick, and a peculiar office was made for it; but the prayer that was uſed in it plainly ſhews that it was with a view to their recovery, for which purpoſe it is ſtill uſed in the Greek church; and no doubt they ſupport the credit of it with many reports, of which ſome may be true, of perſons who had recovered upon uſing it.

But becauſe it failed ſo often, that the credit of this rite was in danger of ſuffering much in the eſteem of the world, they began in the tenth century, to ſay that it did good to the *ſoul*, even when the body was not the better for it, and then they applied it to the ſeveral parts of the body, after having originally applied it to the diſeaſed parts only. In this manner was the rite performed in the eleventh century. In the twelfth the prayers that had been made before for the ſoul of the ſick perſon, though only as a part of the office (the pardon of ſin being ſuppoſed to be preparatory to their recovery) came to be conſidered as the moſt eſſential part of it. After this, the ſchoolmen brought it into ſhape, and then it was decreed to be

be a ſacrament by pope Eugenius; and it was finally eſtabliſhed at the council of Trent*.

Notwithſtanding the novelty, and apparent abſurdity of theſe five additional ſacraments, Wickliffe acknowledged all the ſeven; defining a ſacrament to be a *viſible token of ſomething inviſible.* He even ſaw nothing unſcriptural in extreme unction †.

It is much to be wiſhed, that as theſe five additional ſacraments are now univerſally abandoned in all the reformed churches, chriſtians would rectify their notions concerning the remaining two, and not conſider them, as they did in the times of popiſh darkneſs, to be *outward and viſible ſigns of inward and ſpiritual grace.* For that will always encourage the laying an improper ſtreſs upon them, to the undervaluing of that good diſpoſition of mind, and thoſe good works, which alone can recommend us to the favour of God, and to which only his eſpecial grace and favour is annexed.

* Burnet on the Articles, p. 365.
† Gilpin's Life of him, p. 66.

THE

HISTORY

OF THE

Corruptions of Chriſtianity.

PART VIII.

A Hiſtory of the Changes that have been made in the Method of conducting PUBLIC WORSHIP.

THE INTRODUCTION.

THE ſubject of this part of my work is no very important article in the hiſtory of the corruptions of chriſtianity, becauſe mere *forms* are but of little conſequence in religion, except when they are put in the place of ſomething more ſubſtantial; and indeed too much of this will be found to have been the caſe in this buſineſs. It will, however, be a matter of curioſity to many perſons, to ſee what changes have been made from time to time in the forms of chriſtian worſhip; and therefore I did not omit to note ſuch particulars concerning it, as happened to fall in my way,

way, but without giving myſelf much trouble to look for them. It will ſeem, that in general, the ſame ſpirit dictated theſe variations, that led to other things of more importance to the eſſentials of religion. I ſhall begin with a few obſervations on the buildings in which chriſtian aſſemblies were held, their appurtenances, &c.

SECTION I.

Of Churches, and ſome Things belonging to them.

AT firſt chriſtians could have no places to aſſemble in but large rooms in private houſes; and when they began to erect buildings for the purpoſe, it is moſt probable they were ſuch as the Jews made uſe of for their ſynagogues; their manner of conducting public worſhip, as well as their regulations for the government of churches, being copied from the Jews; and as far as appears nothing more ſimple, or more proper, could have been adopted for the purpoſe.

Of the buildings themſelves we know but little. The names that were originally given to theſe places of aſſembly, were the ſame as thoſe of the Jewiſh ſynagogues, viz. συναγωγαι or προσευχαι that

that is, *houſes of prayer* but afterwards they were called κυριακα, and in Latin *dominica*, whence came the German word *Thom*, and the Flemiſh and Engliſh words *Church* and *Kirk*. Theſe buildings were not called *temples* till the time of Conſtantine. But about that time, in imitation of the pagans, they called the magnificent buildings which were then erected for the purpoſe of public worſhip by that name. And theſe being generally made to encloſe the tombs of martyrs, theſe tombs were called *altars*, on account of their bearing ſome reſemblance to the altars of the heathen temples. And from this came the cuſtom, at the end of the fourth century, of putting bones and other relics of martyrs in all thoſe places which were uſed for the celebration of the Lord's ſupper, inſtead of the *wooden tables*, which were uſed for that purpoſe*.

When Conſtantine ordered the chriſtian churches to be rebuilt, it was done with great pomp; and before they were uſed for the purpoſe of public worſhip, ſome ceremony of *conſecration*, began to be uſed. But at firſt nothing more was done for that purpoſe, beſides ſinging of pſalms, preaching, and receiving the Lord's ſupper, that is, nothing more, in fact, than going through the uſual forms of public worſhip, but probably with greater ſolemnity and devotion,

* Sueur, A. D. p. 211.

followed

followed by feasting and other marks of festivity; and it soon became the custom to repeat this festivity on the same day annually.

In 538, it appears, that the dedications of churches were sometimes made by sprinkling of holy water. For in that year pope Vigilius says that this ceremony was not necessary; it being sufficient for the consecration of churches to celebrate the eucharist, and deposit relics in them. But in 601, pope Gregory expressly ordered that only water should be added. In 816, a synod was held at Canterbury, in which, besides these things it was ordered that the images of the saints, whose names the churches bore, should be painted upon the wall. From the year 1150 they added the signature of the cross, and other figures on the pavement and walls; and afterwards they traced on the pavement the Greek and Latin alphabet, in the form of a cross; and lastly they added the litany of the Virgin Mary and other saints*.

That some ceremony or some peculiar solemnity, should be used on the first making use of any building destined for the purpose of public worship, is natural, and certainly not improper, provided nothing more be implied in it, besides solemnly setting it apart for that particular and

* Sueur, A. D. 335.

valuable

valuable purpoſe; and we find that ſolemn conſecrations were made of the temple of Jeruſalem, and of every thing belonging to the Jewiſh religion. But the ceremonies above-mentioned, ſhew that ſome peculiar virtue was aſcribed to them, and that it was ſuppoſed they imparted a character of peculiar ſanctity to the building itſelf. And that the *bells* in them (which ſerved no other purpoſe originally, beſides that of calling the people together) ſhould have any form of conſecration in churches is a little extraordinary. This, however, was done with much ſolemnity by John XIII. in 968.

There having been caſt at that time a larger bell than had ever been made before for the church of Lateran at Rome, this pope ſprinkled it with holy water, "bleſſed it, and conſecrated "it to God with holy ceremonies," from which is come the cuſtom of conſecrating all bells uſed in churches, and which the common people call *baptizing* them. Upon this occaſion they pray that when the bell ſhall ſound they may be delivered from the ambuſhes of their enemies, from apparitions, tempeſts, thunder, wounds, and every evil ſpirit. During the ſervice, which is a very long one, they make many aſperſions of holy water, and ſeveral unctions on the bells, both within and without; and at each unction they pray that the bell may be "ſanctified and con-"ſecrated, in the name of the Father, of the Son,

" Son, and of the Holy Spirit, to the honour of " Emanuel, and under the patronage of ſuch or " ſuch a ſaint*."

The idea of this ceremony, as almoſt of every other that was uſed by chriſtians, was adopted from the pagan ritual, in which there was a ſolemn conſecration of every inſtrument uſed in their worſhip. And indeed there were conſecrations for the ſame purpoſe of every thing that was made uſe of in the worſhip of the Jews. But nothing in the heathen ritual, can equal the abſurdity of this conſecration of bells. For beſides what is obſerved before, in order to make this ceremony a more proper *baptiſm*, (a name that was firſt moſt probably given to it by the vulgar, from the ſprinkling of the bell with holy water) godfathers and godmothers were appointed on this occaſion, to anſwer queſtions inſtead of the bell; and they pray that God would give the bell his Holy Spirit, that it may be ſanctified for the purpoſes above-mentioned, and eſpecially for driving away witches, and evil ſpirits, and preventing tempeſts in the air, which were ſuppoſed to be cauſed by thoſe ſpirits. The bell had alſo a name given to it as in baptiſm†. I ſhall proceed to mention other things which ſuperſtition has introduced into chriſtian churches, and eſpecially ſuch as were borrowed from the pagan worſhip.

* Sueur, A. D. 968. † Moſheim, vol. ii. p. 350.

In

In popiſh churches the firſt thing that we are ſtruck with is a veſſel of what is called *holy water*, into which thoſe who enter dip their finger, and then mark their foreheads with the ſign of the croſs. This holy water, there can be no doubt, came from the *luſtral water* of the pagans, as indeed learned catholics allow. This water was alſo placed at the entrance of the heathen temples, and thoſe who entered were ſprinkled with it. The firſt expreſs mention made of holy water among chriſtians is in an epiſtle of Vigilius biſhop of Rome, written in 538, in ſpeaking of the conſecration of churches, as was mentioned above; though ſome have thought that to have been holy water which Syneſius mentions, as placed at the entrance of the churches, for the purpoſe of waſhing their hands before prayer *. Middleton farther obſerves, that the compoſition of this holy water is the ſame with that of the heathens, viz. common ſalt and water; and alſo that the form of the *aſpergillum*, or *aſperſorium*, is much the ſame with that which was formerly uſed by the pagans †.

A fondneſs for the *ſign of the croſs* was one of the firſt ſuperſtitions of chriſtians. It was probably firſt uſed by way of diſtinguiſhing themſelves from the heathens, or to ſhew the heathens that they were not aſhamed of that with which they were moſt reproached, viz. the crucifixion

* Sueur, A. D. 457. † Letters from Rome, p. 138.

of their master. From this constant use of it they began to imagine that there was some peculiar virtue in the thing itself. They also imagined it to be alluded to in many passages of the Old Testament, and various rites of the Jewish religion, and they were also pleased to find the traces of it every where else. Hence came the custom of marking themselves with it, which is said to have been first done by the Valentinians, and then by the Montanists, of whom was Tertullian. who makes great boast of it. But it does not appear to have been used in the public offices of religion in the three first centuries, or that crosses made of wood or metal, were ever used till it was imagined that Helena, the mother of Constantine, had discovered the true cross in 326*.

Burning *wax lights* in the day time was used in many heathen ceremonies, for which they are ridiculed by Lanctantius. "The heathens," says he, "light up candles to God, as if he lived in "the dark; and do not they deserve to pass for "madmen, who offer lamps to the author and "giver of light?" But not long after this, these very wax lights were introduced into christian worship.

Another thing that was noted by the early christians, as peculiar to the pagans, was *incense*,

* Larroche, p. 528.

But

But ſo early as the third century, we find this alſo made uſe of in chriſtian churches. And Middleton ſays, that even the *thuribulum* itſelf was taken into the ſervice of the chriſtian altar, together with the incenſe. They are mentioned by Ambroſe and Chryſoſtom, as in common uſe, both in the eaſtern and weſtern churches in their time*. But both wax lights and incenſe were firſt introduced into the eaſtern churches, and from them were adopted in the Weſt.

Laſtly, *proceſſions*, which are conducted with great ſolemnity by the papiſts, were alſo copied from the heathen worſhip. Among the Romans they were inſtituted by Numa, and both in the pagan and popiſh proceſſions, the chief magiſtrates often aſſiſted †.

* Middleton's Letters, p. 237. † Ib. p. 189.

SECTION II.

Of Ceremonies in general, and other Things relating to Public Worſhip.

HAVING made the preceding obſervations on the *places* in which the public worſhip of chriſtians was performed, and ſome other things and circumſtances belonging to them; I proceed to give an account of what was tranſacted within the place; but firſt I ſhall make a few general remarks on modes and forms in chriſtian worſhip.

We may take it for granted that originally chriſtians had no proper *ceremonies* in their worſhip. But after the ſign of the croſs, wax lights, and incenſe were introduced, the *ceremonial* of chriſtian worſhip came to be as complex as that of the pagan worſhip had been. So much progreſs had been made in theſe things in the time of Auſtin, that he complained of it, ſaying that the church was ſo full of ceremonial obſervances, that the condition of the Jews under the Law, was much more ſupportable. But the church, he ſays, amidſt much ſtraw and tares bears many things*. But ſo much were ceremonies multiplied before the ninth century, that large treatiſes were then written to explain them.

* Epiſt. cxix. Cap. xix. Opera, vol. ii. p. 577.

There

There not being in the early ages of the church any power that could enforce uniformity in the methods of worſhip, it happened unavoidably, that different cuſtoms got eſtabliſhed in different places. Hence every church of note had its peculiar *ritual*, which was adopted by all the churches that depended upon it; and thoſe of the Eaſt differed very conſiderably from thoſe of the Weſt.

The weſtern church was loaded with ceremonies chiefly by Gregory the Great, in the ſixth century. He had great fertility of invention in this reſpect, and eloquence to recommend his inventions; but he did not impoſe them upon others, though perhaps for want of power. Almoſt every pope in the next century added ſomething new to the antient rites and inſtitutions; and in the time of Charlemaigne, they were propagated through all the Latin churches.

No perſon urged this buſineſs ſo much as Gregory VII. eſpecially with reſpect to Spain, where he met with the greateſt oppoſition from the attachment of the people to their antient Gothic or Moſarabic liturgy. But the pope carried his point at laſt, notwithſtanding two very remarkable deciſions in favour of the Gothic liturgy, at the appointment of the nobles at Caſtile. They firſt ordered two champions to fight, one for each of them, when he that was for the

Gothic ritual proved to be victorious. They then threw both the Miſſals into the fire, when the Roman was conſumed, and the Gothic, they ſay, was taken out unhurt. Such was the method of determining moſt diſputes in thoſe days, viz. by an appeal, as they thought, to God, either by the ſword, or ſome kind of *ordeal*, depending upon a divine interpoſition in the reſult of it.

At length, however, the Roman ritual was univerſally uſed in the weſtern church. And the Engliſh reformers, inſtead of framing a new liturgy, had recourſe to the offices of the church of Rome, leaving out what was moſt offenſive.

There can be no doubt, but that originally, all the parts of public worſhip were performed in the language that was beſt underſtood by the aſſembly; and as the Latin tongue was beſt underſtood by the generality of chriſtians in the Weſt, this, of courſe, was generally, if not univerſally uſed. But after the irruption of the northern nations, the knowledge of this language was much leſs general, and in the tenth or eleventh century it was hardly underſtood at all. But from this time the uſe of the Latin tongue was continued for other reaſons.

In thoſe dark ages the clergy affected to keep the people in ignorance, and in a ſtate of dependence

pendence upon themſelves, and wiſhed to make them think that the whole buſineſs of reconciling men to God was in their hands. The ſcriptures were likewiſe kept from the people, and the whole ſervice was ſo loaded with ceremonies, that it had the appearance of a *charm*, the whole ſecret and virtue of which, was in the breaſt of the prieſt; and to continue the ſervice in an unknown tongue contributed greatly to the impreſſion which they wiſhed to make. The Latin tongue ſtill continues to be uſed in all the Roman catholic churches, notwithſtanding ſeveral attempts have been made to remedy this great and glaring evil.

It is not however, peculiar to the church of Rome. For it is ſaid that a veneration for antiquity inducest he Egyptian chriſtians to uſe the Coptic language in their church. Alſo the Jacobites and Neſtorians uſe the Syriac language, and the Abyſſinians the old Ethiopic, though all theſe languages have long ſince become obſolete and unintelligible to the multitude*. The Greeks alſo celebrate the Lord's ſupper in antient Greek; but this is ſufficiently underſtood by the common people, the modern Greek not being very different from it.

The *habits* of the clergy could not, originally, have been any thing but the uſual dreſs of their

* Moſheim vol. ii. p. 343.

reſpective countries. But it not being thought decent for perſons of ſuch grave characters as the clergy, to follow new cuſtoms and faſhions, they retained their old flowing garments, after the northern nations had introduced the uſe of ſhort ones, But beſides this, the habits of the pagan prieſts, which had always been different from thoſe of other perſons, at the time of their officiating, were probably imitated by the chriſtian clergy, though I cannot ſay that I have met with any particular account of it.

We find, however, that the clergy were diſtinguiſhed by their habits, while they were officiating, in the time of Sylveſter, when mention is made of *Dulmatics* for the deacons, and of a certain cloth with which their left hand was to be covered. The fourth canon of the council of Carthage preſcribed the uſe of the *cope* in reading the goſpel, and at the time of the oblation only. And Gregory the Great invented new-faſhioned habits, like thoſe deſcribed in the ceremonial law of the Jews*.

* Larroche, p. 539, Hiſtory of Antient Ceremonies, p. 82.

SECTION III.

Of the proper Parts of Public Worſhip.

ORIGINALLY chriſtians met to read the ſcriptures, to explain them, or to preach, to ſing pſalms, to pray, and to adminiſter the Lord's ſupper. The *creed* was made uſe of only at baptiſm, when it was taught to all the catechumens, who were probably made to recite it after the perſon who adminiſtered the ordinance. Afterwards, when articles of faith were more attended to, and it behoved all the biſhops to take care to prevent the growth of hereſy, creeds began to be recited by the whole aſſembly. That this was the true reaſon of the preſent practice, is evident from its being the *Nicene creed*, and not that of *the apoſtles*, as it is called, that was firſt uſed for this purpoſe, It was alſo firſt introduced by Timothy, biſhop of Conſtantinople, who did it in order to make Macedonius who ejected that creed, more odious to the people. This was in the reign of the emperor Anaſtaſius, who died in 521. About this time this creed was alſo repeated in the church of Antioch every time the Lord's ſupper was adminiſtered.

Before this time it had been the cuſtom to repeat the creed only the day preceding Good Friday, when catechizing was more ſolemnly performed,

performed, in order to the celebration of baptism on the Easter Sunday following. The repetition of it on that day was first appointed by the council of Laodicea. But the constant reading of the creed did not take place in the West till about 590, when it was ordered by the council of Toledo, in imitation of the eastern churches. At this time it was the Nicene creed only that was made use of and for some time it seemed to eclipse that of the apostles; but afterwards this latter creed recovered its credit*.

It will be just worth while to mention a few particulars concerning the *posture* of the priest and people, during the celebration of the particular parts of public worship.

The usual posture of praying had been standing or kneeling, or to express great self-abasement and humility, prostration; but a canon had been made (for what reason I have not enquired) to forbid the practice of kneeling on Sundays from Easter to Whitsuntide, which gave rise to the term *stations*. This, however, was not approved by the church of Rome†. When the scriptures were read, it is probable that the people sat; but in time it became a custom for the people to stand while the *gospel* was reading. And it is said that Anastasius, bishop of Rome, who died in 402, ordered the priests to stand up and

* History of the Apostles Creed, p. 44, &c.
† History of Antient Ceremonies, p. 17.

incline

incline their heads a little, while they read the goſpel*.

All the heathens contrived their temples ſo that they ſhould pray with their faces towards the *Eaſt*. This was introduced into chriſtian worſhip about the time of Jerom, though it was not then generally approved of. Pope Leo the Great condemned this cuſtom, becauſe it was much uſed by the Manicheans†. By degrees, however, the cuſtom of looking towards the Eaſt during the repetition of the creed became univerſal, and likewiſe the *bowing at the name of Jeſus*, in the repetition of it. This practice was countenanced by the literal interpretation of Phil. ii. 10. *At the name of Jeſus every knee ſhall bow.* This, however, was thought to be ſo very idle a ſuperſtition, that it was almoſt univerſally laid aſide at the reformation. But it is generally practiſed in the church of England; and biſhop Laud ſeverely puniſhed thoſe who did not conform to this ceremony in his time.

Singing ſeems always to have been a part of the public worſhip of chriſtians, and followed the reading of the ſcriptures. They ſung either the pſalms of David, or hymns of their own compoſing. But the former, Moſheim ſays, were only received among chriſtian hymns in the fourth

* Sueur, A. D. 402. † Ib. A. D. 443.

century.

century. The ſinging of theſe pſalms, or hymns, was alſo very common with them in their own houſes, in the courſe of the week. But the method of ſinging by *antiphony* or *anthem*, that is, one part of the congregation, as the clergy, ſinging one verſe, and the reſt, or the people, ſinging another, is ſaid to have been introduced about the middle of the fourth century, into the church of Antioch, by Flavianus and Diodorus, and into the church of Conſtantinople by Chryſoſtom*.

This method of ſinging was introduced into the church of Rome by Celeſtine in 418. Afterwards, Gregory the Great compoſed an *Antiphonary* for the whole year, with verſicles, or reſponſes for every day of it. He then appointed the college or choir of ſinging men, to chant the office†. In the fifth century it was the cuſtom in ſome places, to keep up the exerciſes of ſinging both day and night, different ſets of perſons continually relieving each other‡.

Muſical inſtruments were not introduced into churches till the thirteenth or fourteenth century. Thomas Aquinas ſays, the church does not uſe muſical inſtruments to praiſe God, leſt ſhe ſhould ſeem to judaize§. But in 1312, Marinus Sanutus

* Sueur, A. D. 398. Pierce's Vindication, p. 390.
† Hiſtory of Antient Ceremonies, p. 81.
‡ Moſheim, vol. i. p. 397. § Pierce's Vindicat. p. 385. 395.

introduced

introduced organs into churches*; and they have been much uſed ever ſince, though there have always been perſons in all eſtabliſhments, as well as in particular ſects, who preferred a more ſimple mode of worſhip; and even admitting that muſic might aſſiſt in exciting devotional feelings, did not chuſe that, in general they ſhould depend upon that mechanical aſſiſtance.

In the primitive churches, preaching was nothing more than the expoſition of the ſcriptures, a portion of which was always read in the courſe of the ſervice. Origen is ſaid to have been the firſt who did this in a more copious and diffuſive manner, explaining the ſcripture in an allegorical way; and by this means introduced longer ſermons than had been uſual†.

When heathen philoſophers and rhetoricians were converted to chriſtianity, they introduced their cuſtom of haranguing on particular ſubjects, and particular occaſions, and carefully premeditated or precompoſed their ſermons; ſometimes prefixing to their diſcourſes ſhort texts of ſcripture, probably that they might not paſs too ſuddenly from the old method of interpreting the ſacred writings, and ſometimes omitting them. In this ſtyle are the ſermons of Chryſoſtom, conſiſt-

* Jortin's Remarks, vol. v. p. 569.
† Moſheim, vol. i. p. 235.

ing

ing of such kind of eloquence as the Greeks and Romans were fond of displaying, when they harangued the populace, or pleaded at the bar.

So far did christian preachers in those times depart from the simplicity of the gospel, and so little were they influenced by the spirit of christianity, that, in imitation of the Grecian orators, some of them even hired persons to clap their hands, and express their applause by other gestures and vociferations at proper intervals, on signals previously concerted between them and the preacher, or his particular friends.

These set harangues were only occasional, and were by no means delivered every Lord's day, in every christian church; and in the dark ages, few persons being qualified to preach, sermons became very scarce. At this day the Roman catholics meet only, in general, to hear prayers, and to celebrate mass. They have no sermons, except in Lent, on certain festivals, and on some other particular occasions. It is more particularly observed, that it was in the ninth century that the bishops and priests ceased to instruct the people by sermons as they had done before*.

Charlemaigne, finding the clergy absolutely incapable of instructing the people by sermons of

* Sueur, A. D. 853.

their

their own, or of explaining, with perſpicuity and judgment, thoſe portions of ſcripture which are diſtinguiſhed in the ritual by the name of *Epiſtle* and *Goſpel*, ordered Paulus Diaconus and Alciun to compile, from the antient doctors of the church, *Homilies*, or diſcourſes upon the epiſtles and goſpels, which a ſtupid and ignorant ſet of prieſts were to commit to memory, and recite to the people. This gave riſe to that famous collection, which went by the title of the *Homiliarium* of Charlemaigne; and which being followed as a model by many productions of the ſame kind, compoſed by private perſons, contributed much to nourith the indolence, ſays Moſheim, and to perpetuate the ignorance of a worthleſs clergy*. In this, however, as well as in his other regulations reſpecting the church, he certainly had the beſt intentions; and in thoſe times it is probable that nothing better could have been done. A ſcheme of this kind was adopted in England when the preſent *book of homilies* was compiled, and appointed to be read in churches.

Before the reformation, after the preacher had named and opened his text, he called the people to go to their prayers, telling them what they were to pray for. "Ye ſhall pray," ſays he, "for "the king, for the pope, for the holy catholic "church, &c." after which all the people went

* Vol. ii. p. 81.

over

over their beads in ſilence; and the miniſter kneeling down, did the ſame. They would beſides ſay a *pater noſter*, *Ave Maria*, *Deus miſereatur noſtri*, *Domine ſalvum fac regem*, *Gloria patri*, *&c.* and then the ſermon proceeded*. The manner in which moſt of the Engliſh clergy pray in the pulpit before ſermon is ſtill the ſame; and is what they call *bidding prayers*, or an exhortation to pray for ſuch and ſuch things. But then no time is allowed for the prayers that are ſo ordered.

In the primitive church the public prayers followed the ſermon, and preceded the celebration of the Lord's ſupper; and it is evident, from many circumſtances, that at firſt all theſe prayers were delivered without book, and were ſuch as the biſhop, or the prieſt who officiated, could prepare himſelf. Juſtin Martyr ſays, that the preſident of the aſſembly offered prayers and thankſgivings, *as he was able*, (ὁσῃ δυναμις αὐτῳ). Origen alſo ſays, "We pray according to our abilities;" and Tertullian, "We pray to God without a monitor, "becauſe our prayers flow from our own minds." Baſil gives an inſtance of a variation in his prayer, for which he was blamed by ſome, as being inconſiſtent with himſelf†.

In time, however, partly in order to avoid diverſity of opinions, and in part, alſo, that the

* Neale's Hiſt. i. p. 33. † Pierce's Vindication, p. 429.

congregation

congregation might not be offended by prayers prepared by perſons who were not capable of doing it with propriety, it came to be the cuſtom to compoſe the prayers before-hand, and to ſubmit them to the approbation of the principal perſons in the church. This was particularly ordered at the third council of Carthage*.

At the council of Laodicea, held in 364, the ſame prayers were ordered to be uſed morning and evening; but, in general, every biſhop ordered what prayers he thought proper, till about the time of Auſtin; when it was ordered that, to prevent hereſy, no prayers ſhould be uſed but by common advice. Thus in time a great variety of *liturgies*, or forms of celebrating public worſhip, were in uſe in different provinces, and different ſees. The firſt mention we find of theſe liturgies is towards the end of the fourth century†.

In early times, though the officiating miniſter delivered the prayers, the people were not intirely ſilent; for they made ſmall *interlocutions* or *reſponſes*, as *Lift up your hearts. We lift them up unto the Lord*, mentioned by Cyprian. *The Lord be with you, and with thy ſpirit*, in the time of Chryſoſtom‡.

* Sueur, A. D. 397. † Neale's Hiſt. vol. i. p. 37.
‡ Peirce's Vindication, p. 426.

The last circumstance that I shall notice, relating to the forms of public worship, is that in the primitive church, where the service always ended with communion, there was recited *a roll*, in which the names of the more eminent saints of the catholic church, and of the holy bishops, martyrs, or confessors, of every particular church, were registered. This was an honourable remembrance of such as had died in the christian faith. But when the soundness of any person's faith was questioned, his name was not read till that difficulty was removed. Chrysostom having been expelled from the church of Constantinople, it was a long time before his name was inserted in this roll. This was the custom, by which as I have observed before, provision was made for excommunicating persons even after their death.

SECTION

SECTION IV.

Of Feſtivals, &c. in the Chriſtian Church.

THE primitive chriſtians had no feſtivals beſides Sunday, on which they always met for public worſhip, as may be inferred from Juſtin Martyr. This day Conſtantine ordered to be obſerved as a day of reſt from labour; but huſbandmen were allowed to cultivate the earth on that day*. By degrees, however, in imitation of the Jews or heathens, but chiefly the latter, chriſtians came to have as many annual feſtivals as the heathens themſelves. Of the principal of theſe I ſhall give a general account.

The firſt that was obſerved by chriſtians was *Eaſter*, on the time of the Jewiſh paſſover, being the anniverſary of our Saviour's ſufferings, death, and reſurrection. Originally, however, this was probably a *feſtival*, and reſpected the reſurrection of our Saviour only; but afterwards they began to keep a *faſt*, on the anniverſary of the crucifixion; but it was a long time before this faſt was extended, as it now is to the whole ſeaſon of *Lent*, or forty days before Eaſter.

* Sueur, A. D. 320.

The primitive christians used, indeed, to join fasting to prayer upon extraordinary occasions; but this was always voluntary, and those who intirely omitted it were not censured. The first person who is said to have laid down any express rules for fasting, was Montanus, who was remarkable for his rigour in other respects. However, a fast on the anniversary of Christ's crucifixion, or what we call *Good Friday*, is of very great antiquity; but both the time, and the degree of fasting, was originally very various, depending upon each person's particular fancy. Irenæus says, that some persons fasted before Easter one day, some two, and some more; but that the unity of the faith was maintained notwithstanding that variety.

By fasting, the antients always meant abstaining from meat and drink from morning till evening; and what Tertullian and others call *stations*, or half fasts, were those days on which they assembled for prayer in the morning, and continued that exercise till three in the afternoon, when they received the Lord's supper. They never fasted on a Saturday or Sunday, and even thought it a crime to do so, except on the Saturday before Easter-day, on which they celebrated the resurrection of Christ; because, during that time, they said, the bridegroom was taken from them.

Because

Becauſe the time that our Saviour lay in the grave was about forty hours, this faſt was called *Quarantana* or *Quadrageſſima*, and by contraction *Quareſme*, and *Careſme* or *Carême*, which is the French term for *Lent*. Another reaſon for faſting at this particular time, was, that many perſons were then preparing for baptiſm, and others for communion, which, as ſuperſtition prevailed, was frequented more generally, and attended upon with more ſolemnity, on that day.

Even the Montaniſts only faſted two weeks in the year; and in theſe they excepted Saturdays and Sundays*. Lent was firſt confined to a certain number of days in the fourth century. At this time, however, abſtinence from fleſh and wine was by many judged ſufficient for the purpoſe of faſting, and from this time it prevailed in the weſtern church†. Soon after the time of Tertullian, chriſtians began to obſerve Wedneſdays and Fridays for the purpoſe of faſting; and they kept theſe faſts all the year, except between Eaſter and Pentecoſt, in which time they neither faſted nor kneeled in churches. In 416, Innocent I. ordered that the people ſhould faſt on Saturdays; but the Greeks and all the Eaſt paid no regard to this ordinance‡.

* Sueur, A. D. 206. † Moſheim, vol. i. p. 324.
‡ Sueur, A. D. 391.

At the time of the council of Nice, the week before Eaſter was called *Quarantana*, or *Lent*; though ſome obſerved more days, and ſome fewer, at pleaſure; but within forty years after this council, Lent was extended to three weeks*.

Durandus tells us that Lent was counted to begin on that which is now the firſt Sunday in Lent, and to end on Eaſter-eve, which time containing forty-two days, if you take out of them the ſix Sundays on which it was held to be unlawful to faſt, there will remain only thirty-ſix days; and therefore that the number of forty days which Chriſt faſted might be completed, Gregory the Great added to Lent four days of the week preceding, viz. that which we call *Aſh Wedneſday*, and the three days following it; ſo that our preſent Lent is a ſuperſtitious imitation of our Saviour's faſt of forty days†.

Before the council of Nice, there had been a great difference between the eaſtern and weſtern churches about the time of keeping Eaſter, the chriſtians in the Eaſt following the cuſtom of the Jews, with whom the day on which the Paſchal lamb was killed was always the fourteenth of their month Niſan, on whatever day of the week

* Sueur, A. D. 325. 364.

† Hiſtory of Popery, vol. i. p. 186.

it

it happened to fall; but with the Latins Eaſter-day had always been the Sunday following, being the anniverſary of our Saviour's reſurrection. At the council of Nice the cuſtom of the Latin church was eſtabliſhed; and as aſtronomy was more cultivated in Egypt, it was given in charge to the biſhop of Alexandria, to publiſh to the other churches the proper time of keeping Eaſter, by what were called *Paſchal epiſtles*. For the ſame purpoſe afterwards the *Golden number* was invented*.

Pentecoſt was a Jewiſh feſtival, celebrated fifty days after the paſſover; and being likewiſe diſtinguiſhed in the chriſtian hiſtory by the deſcent of the holy ſpirit, it was obſerved next after Eaſter; and, as far as appears, about the time of Tertullian. We call it *Whitſuntide*. Theſe are the only great feſtivals that chriſtians were not at liberty to fix where they pleaſed. All the other feſtivals they fixed at thoſe times of the year which the pagans uſed to obſerve with the greateſt ſolemnity, with a view to facilitate their converſion to chriſtianity.

The feaſt of *Chriſtmas*, in commemoration of the nativity of Chriſt, is mentioned by Chryſoſtom as unknown at Antioch till within ten

* Hiſtory of Antient Ceremonies, p. 44.

years of the time of his writing; and therefore he concluded that it had lately been introduced from Rome*. It was thought to be firſt obſerved by the followers of Baſilides, and from them to have been adopted by the orthodox, in the fourth century, when the feſtival of *Chriſt's baptiſm* was introduced; in conſequence of which that feaſt of the nativity was removed from the ſixth of January, to the twenty-fifth of December: the former retaining the name of the *Epiphany*, which feaſt only, and not that of the nativity, is obſerved in the Eaſt†.

Feſtivals in honour of the apoſtles and martyrs are all of late date, none of them earlier than the time of Conſtantine, when magnificent temples were built round the tombs of ſome of their martyrs; and then the feſtivals were only held at the places where they were ſuppoſed to have ſuffered.

Vigils were the aſſemblies of the antient chriſtians by night, in the time of perſecution, when they durſt not meet in the day-time. Afterwards they were obſerved before Eaſter, but they were kept not as feaſts, which was done afterwards, but as *faſts*, as appears from Tertullian.

* Baſnage Hiſtoire des Egliſes Reformées, vol. i. p. 280.
† Peirce's Vindication, p. 510.

The

The feaſt of *Aſcenſion* was obſerved about the time of Auſtin. The feaſt of *Circumciſion* is firſt mentioned by Maximus Taurinenſis, who flouriſhed in 450; and the feaſt of *Purification* was perhaps inſtituted in the ninth century*. The feaſt of *Advent* is of no earlier authority than that of Innocent III. in the thirteenth century; and the *Vigils* of the great feſtivals are all later than the tenth century†.

It was Mamert, biſhop of Vienne in Gaul, who, about 463, firſt inſtituted the faſt of *Rogation*, that is, the prayers that are made three days before the feaſt of Aſcenſion, that is, the Monday, Tueſday, and Wedneſday before Holy Thurſday; which was expreſsly contrary to the order eſtabliſhed in the antient church, forbidding all faſting between Eaſter and Pentecoſt. This faſt of Rogation was generally received in the Weſt preſently after the time of this Mamert‡. The biſhop of Vence added the proceſſions to them, in imitation of the *Luſtrationes Ambervales* of the heathens, which were made round their fields, in order to render them fruitful; and theſe were attended with much intemperance and diſorder; being made, no doubt, in all reſpects, after the pagan manner.

* Pierce's Vindication, p. 512. &c. † Sueur, A. D. 392.
‡ Sueur, A. D. 392.

Alcinus

Alcinus Avitus, who ſucceeded Heſychius, the immediate ſucceſſor of Mamert, in the church of Vienne, deſcribes the occaſion of inſtituting this faſt in his homily on the Rogation. He there ſays that the city of Vienne had ſuffered much by fire, thunder ſtorms, earthquakes, extraordinary noiſes in the night, prodigies, ſigns in the heavens, wild beaſt, and other calamities; that on this the biſhop of the city ordered the people to faſt three days with prayer and repentance, that, by the example of the Ninevites, they might avert the judgments of God. He ſays that thereupon the anger of God was appeaſed, and that in commemoration of it Mamert ordered this faſt to be obſerved every year. His example was ſoon followed, firſt by the church of Clermont in Auvergne, then by all their neighbours, and afterwards throughout all Gaul. In 801, Leo III. confirmed this faſt, and made it univerſal*.

The faſt of *Ember Weeks*, or *Jejunia quatuor temporum*, was probably inſtituted a little before Leo the Great, in the middle of the fifth century†. But others think that it is not quite certain that he ſpeaks of it‡. Some ſay that pope Gelaſius having ordered that the ordina-

* Sueur, A. D. 462. 463. † Peirce's Vindication, p. 529.
‡ Sueur, A. D. 392.

tion

tion of prieſts and deacons ſhould be on the four weeks of Ember, or ember days, viz. the Wednesday, Friday and Saturday after the firſt Sunday in Lent, after Whitſunday, after the fourteenth of September, and the thirteenth of December, and this ceremony being always conducted with faſting and prayer, it came to be a cuſtom to faſt at that time *.

It was upon the idea of the ſpiritual benefit that would ariſe from viſiting the church of St. Peter at Rome, and alſo in imitation of the Jewiſh jubilee, and the ſecular games among the Romans, that the popiſh *Jubilee* is founded. This feſtival, which is celebrated with the utmoſt pomp and magnificence, was inſtituted by Boniface VIII. in the year 1300, in conſequence, as it is ſaid, of a rumour, the origin of which is not known, which was ſpread among the inhabitants of Rome, in 1299, that all who within the limits of the following year, ſhould viſit the church of St. Peter, ſhould receive the remiſſion of all their ſins, and that this privilege would be annexed to the ſame obſervance every hundredth year.

The ſucceſſors of Boniface added a number of new rites and inventions to this ſuperſtitious inſtitution, and finding by experience that it added

* Hiſt. of Antient Ceremonies, p. 67.

luſtre

luſtre to the church of Rome, and increaſed its revenue, they made its return more frequent. In 1350, Clement VI. ordered that the jubilee ſhould be celebrated every fifty years, on pretence that the Jews did the like, and Paul II. in the fifteenth century, reduced the term to twenty-five years. This year of jubilee is called a *holy year*; but, as the author of the *Hiſtoire des papes* obſerves, it ſhould rather be called the year of ſacrilege, impiety, debauch, and ſuperſtition[9].

Many of theſe feſtivals have been retained by the reformers, eſpecially thoſe of Eaſter, Whitſuntide, and Chriſtmas, and, like the papiſts, they obſerve them with more ſtrictneſs than they do the Sundays.

Our eſtabliſhed church has by no means thrown off the popiſh ſuperſtition with reſpect to faſting. The faſt days in the church of England, are all the Fridays in the year except Chriſtmas day, all the days in Lent, which, beſides Fridays, are thirty-three, ſix more in the Ember weeks, three Rogation days, and the thirtieth of January. The ſum of all the feſtival days is thirty-one. And if to theſe we add the ninety-five faſt days, fifty-two Sundays, and twenty-nine ſaints days, all the days in a

[9] Vol. v. p. 409.

year

year appropriated to religious exerciſes, beſides vigils, will be one hundred and ſeventy-eight; and making allowance for ſome of them interfering with others, they will be about one hundred and ſeventy *.

In ſo little eſteem, however, are theſe obſervances held by the more enlightened members of the eſtabliſhed church, that there can be no doubt but that when any reformation takes place, a great retrenchment will be made in this article.

* Peirce's Vindication, p. 508.

THE

THE

HISTORY

OF THE

Corruptions of Chriſtianity.

PART VIII.

The Hiſtory of CHURCH DISCIPLINE.

THE INTRODUCTION.

THE changes which the diſcipline of the chriſtian church underwent from the time of the apoſtles to the reformation, were as great, and of as much importance in practice, as the changes in any other article relating to chriſtianity. From being highly favourable to good conduct, the eſtabliſhed maxims of it came at length to be a cover for every kind of immorality, to thoſe who choſe to avail themſelves of them. On this account I have given a good deal of attention to the ſubject.

To many perſons, I doubt not, this will be as intereſting an object as any thing in the hiſtory of chriſtianity, and to introduce it in this place will

will make the eaſieſt connection between the two great diviſions of my work, I mean the corruptions of *doctrine*, and the abuſes of *power* in the chriſtian church. It will alſo ſerve to ſhew in what manner theſe departures from the chriſtian ſyſtem promoted each other.

SECTION I.

The Hiſtory of Church Diſcipline in the Time of the chriſtian Fathers.

IN the purer ages of the church, the offences which gave public ſcandal were few; but when they did happen, they were animadverted upon with great rigour. For as many enormities were laid to the charge of chriſtians, they were exceedingly ſolicitous to give no juſt cauſe of obloquy. It is, indeed, probable, that ſome time after the apoſtolic age, the morals of the chriſtians in general were more ſtrict, than we find, by the writings of the apoſtles, they were in their own times. Nor is it to be wondered at, when we conſider that the whole body of the gentile chriſtians, being then newly converted from heatheniſm, muſt have retained many of their former habits, or have eaſily relapſed into them.

Afterwards, moſt of the caſes of ſcandal we meet with relate to the behaviour of chriſtians in

in the time of perſecution, from which many ſhrunk or fled, in a manner that was exceedingly and juſtly diſapproved by the more ſevere. Conſequently, after a perſecution, there was much to do about the re-admiſſion to the privileges of church communion, of thoſe who repented of their weakneſs; and it was a great part of the buſineſs of the councils in the fourth and fifth centuries (which was after the eſtabliſhment of chriſtianity) to ſettle rules concerning the degrees of penance, and the method of receiving penitents into the church. Indeed, beſides the caſes of thoſe who had ſhrunk from perſecution, the governors of chriſtian churches at that time muſt have had many offences of other kinds to animadvert upon; conſidering that chriſtianity had then the countenance of the civil powers, and therefore that people of all ranks, and of all characters, would naturally croud into it. On theſe accounts they found it neceſſary to have a very regular ſyſtem of diſcipline.

In general, we find that about the third and fourth centuries, chriſtians diſtinguiſhed four orders of penitents. The firſt ſtood at the entrance of the church, begging in the moſt earneſt manner the prayers of all that went in. The ſecond were admitted to enter, and to hear the lectures that were given to the catechumens and the expoſition of the ſcriptures, but they were diſmiſſed, together with the catechumens, before the

celebration of the euchariſt. The third lay proſtrate in a certain place in the church, covered with ſackcloth and after receiving the benediction of the biſhop, and the impoſition of hands, were alſo diſmiſſed before the celebration of the euchariſt. The fourth order attended that celebration but did not partake of it. Penitents having paſſed through all theſe orders, were admitted to communion by the impoſition of the hands of the biſhop, or of a prieſt, in the preſence of the whole congregation*.

If any perſons relapſed into the ſame fault for which they had been excommunicated, or excluded from the congregation of the faithful, they were not re-admitted to communion, except in the article of death; but towards the end of the ſeventh century the antient diſcipline began to be relaxed in this reſpect, and they admitted perſons to communion after a ſecond offence. In all times there were ſome crimes for which no repentance could make atonement, ſo that perſons who had been once guilty of them could never be admitted to the peace and communion of the church. Theſe were murder, adultery, and apoſtacy. In this manner, at leaſt, were theſe crimes ſtigmatized, in many churches.

But about the third century pope Zephyrinus begun to relax a little of this diſcipline, admit-

* Sueur, A. D. 213.

ting

ting adulterers to communion after ſome years of penance, in which he was vehemently oppoſed by Tertullian. However, in the time of Cyprian, the penalties impoſed by the biſhop, which were always a public appearance for a certain time in the character of *penitents*, were often relaxed, or abridged, at the entreaty of the confeſſors, or thoſe who had been deſtined to martyrdom; and this was called *indulgence*, of the abuſe of which we ſhall ſee enough in a later period. But at this there was not much to complain of in this buſineſs, except the improper interference of theſe confeſſors, and the too great influence which they were allowed to have in ſuch caſes.

Equally innocent was the buſineſs of *confeſſion*, as it was firſt begun; but we ſee in the courſe of this hiſtory, that it is no uncommon thing for an innocent beginning to lead to a fatal cataſtrophe. The apoſtle Paul exhorts chriſtians to confeſs their ſins one to another; and our Saviour aſſures us that we muſt forgive, as we hope to be forgiven. Upon this was grounded the cuſtom of the primitive churches, to require every perſon who was excommunicated, to make a public confeſſion of his guilt before he was re-admitted to chriſtian communion. In ſome caſes, alſo, a public confeſſion prevented excommunication. It was, likewiſe, the cuſtom for many conſcientious perſons to confeſs their private ſins to ſome of the prieſts in whom they could put the greateſt

confidence, and whoſe advice and prayers they wiſhed to have; and what was at firſt a voluntary thing, was afterwards, but indeed long afterwards, impoſed as a poſitive duty.

Confeſſion was alſo much encouraged by another circumſtance. Many canons made a difference in the degree and time of penance, between thoſe who had accuſed themſelves, and thoſe againſt whom their crimes were proved. Many perſons, therefore, to prevent the ſeverer penalty, came of their own accord to confeſs their ſins; and this was much encouraged, and the virtue of it magnified by the writers of thoſe times. This confeſſion was, originally, always made in public, but ſometimes inconveniencies being found to attend this (eſpecially when the crimes affected other perſons, or the ſtate) a private confeſſion was appointed inſtead of it. In this caſe the biſhop either attended himſelf, or appointed ſome particular prieſt, who from this office got the title of *penitentiary prieſt*, to receive theſe confeſſions.

The difficulty of re-admiſſion to the privileges of the church communion was, in general, very great, and the penances impoſed were exceedingly rigorous, and this, to the end, was one great cauſe of the total relaxation of all diſcipline.

Novatian

Novatian particularly diſtinguiſhed himſelf by refuſing to admit to communion any who had been guilty of the greater crimes, eſpecially that of apoſtacy, leaving them to the judgment of God only. This aroſe from the rigour of Tertullian and the Monatiſts; and it is obſervable that the church of Rome ſtill keeps up this rigorous diſcipline in caſes of *hereſy*, the *relapſed* being delivered to the ſecular arm, without being admitted to penance.

It was ordained by the council of Nice, that thoſe who apoſtatized before baptiſm ſhould not be admitted to the commmunion of the church till after three years of penance, but if they had been of the *faithful*, the penance was to continue ſeven years*. Baſil decided that for the crime of fornication, a man ought to do penance four years. Others for the ſame offence impoſed a penance of nine years, and of adultery eighteen years †.

Hitherto we have ſeen nothing but rigour, and the relaxation did not begin by leſſening the time of penance (except in thoſe caſes in which the confeſſors had improperly interfered) but firſt in the manner of making the confeſſion, then in the place of penance, and laſtly in the commutation of it.

* Sueur, A. D. 325.

† Baſnage Hiſtoire des Egliſes Reformées, vol. i. p. 289.

After the perſecution under the emperor Decius, the orthodox biſhops, Socrates ſays, appointed that the penitents ſhould make their confeſſions to one particular prieſt, and that they ſhould make a public confeſſion of ſuch things only as ſhould be thought proper for public hearing. This cuſtom continued in the eaſtern church till the year 390, when Nectarius the biſhop of Conſtantinople aboliſhed the office of penitentiary prieſts, on account of a woman having been enticed to commit adultery with a deacon of the church, whilſt ſhe ſtayed to perform the duties of faſting and prayer, which had been enjoined her. From this time all confeſſions, public and private, ſeem to have been diſcontinued in the Greek church; and at this day, it is ſaid, that the Greeks make confeſſion to God only.

In the weſtern church public confeſſion continued till the fifth century, but at that time thoſe offenders who had been uſed to make public confeſſion of their crimes, were allowed by Leo the Great to confeſs them privately, to a prieſt appointed for that purpoſe. By this means a great reſtraint upon vice was taken away, and the change was as pleaſing to the ſinner, as it was advantageous to the prieſts in ſeveral reſpects. Of this many perſons at that time were ſufficiently aware; and we find that in 590, a council held at Toledo forbad confeſſion to be made privately

vately to a prieſt, and ordered that it ſhould be made according to the antient canons.

To confeſſion in private ſoon ſucceeded the doing penance in private, which was another great ſtep towards the ruin of an antient diſcipline, which required, indeed, to be moderated, but in a different manner. In the fifth century, however, penitents were ſuffered to do penance ſecretly in ſome monaſtery, or other private place, in the preſence of a few perſons, at the diſcretion of the biſhop, or of the confeſſors, after which abſolution was alſo given in private. This was the only method which they ventured to take with thoſe who would not ſubmit to the eſtabliſhed rules of the church. But in the ſeventh century, all the public penance for ſecret ſins was quite taken away, and Theodore archbiſhop of Canterbury is ſaid to have been the firſt of all the biſhops of the weſtern church who eſtabliſhed this rule*.

Had chriſtians contented themſelves with admoniſhing and finally excommunicating thoſe who were guilty of notorious crimes, and with requiring public confeſſion, with reſtitution in caſe of injuſtice, and left all private offences to every man's own conſcience, no inconvenience would have ariſen from their diſcipline. But by urging too much the importance of confeſſion,

* Burnet on the Articles, p. 346.

and by inrroducing corporeal auſterities, as faſting, &c. as a proper mode of penance, and then changing theſe for alms, and in fact for money, in a future period, paved the way for the utter ruin of all good diſcipline; and at length brought it to be much worſe than a ſtate of no diſcipline at all. However, we have yet ſeen but the firſt ſteps in this fatal progreſs.

SECTION II.

Of the State of Church Diſcipline in the dark Ages, and till the Reformation.

WE have ſeen ſeveral ſymptoms of the change and decay of diſcipline in the laſt period; but in this we ſhall ſee the total ruin of it, in conſequence of the increaſed operation of the ſame cauſes, and the introduction of ſeveral new ones.

After the introduction of *private confeſſion*, it was complained by a council held at Challons, in 813, that perſons did not confeſs their offences fully, but only in part; and therefore they ordered, that the prieſt ſhould make particular *inquiry*, under ſuch heads as were thought to include the principal vices that men were addicted to. At this time, however, confeſſion was not reckoned neceſſary

neceſſary to ſalvation, and was not made in order to obtain abſolution of the prieſt, but to inform perſons how they ought to conduct themſelves with reſpect to God, in order to obtain pardon of him; and therefore the Fathers of this council ſay that confeſſion to God purges ſin, but confeſſion to the prieſt teaches how ſins are purged*.

This buſineſs of confeſſion to prieſts, before it was held to be of univerſal obligation, gave riſe to a new kind of caſuiſtry, which conſiſted in aſcertaining the nature of all kinds of crimes, and in proportioning the penalties to each. This improvement is aſcribed to Theodore, archbiſhop of Canterbury, above-mentioned, who, in a work intitled *the Penitential*, regulated the whole buſineſs of penance, diſtinguiſhing the different kinds of crimes, and preſcribing forms of conſolation, exhortation, and abſolution, adapted to each particular caſe. From Britain theſe regulations were ſoon introduced into all the weſtern provinces, and the *Penitential of Theodore* became a pattern for other works of the ſame nature. But in the next century this buſineſs greatly declined, and gave way to the doctrine of indulgences†.

However, what is now properly called *auricular confeſſion* was not fully eſtabliſhed, and made of univerſal obligation, before the thirteenth cen-

* Sueur A. D. 813. † Moſheim, vol. ii. 26.

tury,

tury, when Innocent III. appointed it by his own authority, in a Lateran council, This doctrine, as it is now received in the church of Rome, requires not only a general acknowledgement, but a particular enumeration of ſins, and of follies; and is appointed to be made to a proper prieſt once at leaſt every year, by all perſons who are arrived at years of diſcretion. Before this law of Innocent, ſeveral doctors had conſidered confeſſion as a duty of divine authority, but it was not publicly received as a doctrine of the church. This law occaſioned the introduction of a number of new injunctions and rites*.

It being notorious to all perſons, that all uſeful church diſcipline was loſt at the time of the reformation, it was thought proper at the council of Trent to do, or at leaſt to ſeem to do ſomething in the buſineſs; and therefore it was ordered that ſcandalous offenders ſhould do public penance, according to the antient canons, and that the biſhops ſhould be judges of it. But things had gone on ſo long in a different train, that it does not appear that any thing was done in conſequence of it.

Together with this change in the buſineſs of confeſſion, other cauſes were at the ſame time operating to the corruption of church diſcipline,

* Moſheim, vol. iii. p. 94. 290.

but

but nothing contributed to it more than the ſtreſs which was then laid upon many things foreign to real virtue, and which were made to take the place of it. Of this nature were the cuſtomary devotions of thoſe days, conſiſting in the frequent repetition of certain prayers, in bodily auſterities, in pilgrimages, in alms to the poor, and donations to the church, &c. Theſe were things that could be *aſcertained*, ſo that it might be known with certainty whether the party had conformed to the penalty or not; whereas a *change of heart and of character* was a thing of a leſs obvious nature, and indeed not much attended to by the generality of confeſſors at that time.

About the end of the eighth century the *commutation of penances* began, and inſtead of the antient ſeverities, *vocal prayers* came to be all that was enjoined, ſo many *Paters* (or repetitions of the Lord's prayer) were held to be equivalent to ſo many days faſting, &c. and the rich were allowed to buy off their penances by giving alms. Alſo the getting many maſſes to be ſaid was thought to be a mode of devotion by which God was ſo much honoured, that the commutation of penance for maſſes was much practiſed. Pilgrimages and wars came on afterwards*.

The immediate cauſe of this commutation of penances was the impoſſibility of performing

* Burnet on the Articles, p. 346.

them,

them, according to the canons of the church; ſince, in many caſes it required more time than the term of human life. For inſtance, a ten years penance being enjoined for a murder, a man who had committed twenty murders, muſt have done penance two hundred years; and therefore ſome other kind of penance was judged abſolutely neceſſary; and the perſon who was chiefly inſtrumental in ſettling the commutations of penance was one Dominic, who communicated them to the celebrated Peter Damiani, whoſe authority in the age in which he lived was very great.

By them it was determined that a hundred years of penance might be compenſated by twenty repetitions of the pſalter, accompanied with diſcipline, that is, the uſe of a whip on the naked ſkin. The computation was made in the following manner. Three thouſand ſtrokes with the whip were judged to be equivalent to a year of penance, and a thouſand blows were to be given in the courſe of repeating ten pſalms. Conſequently, all the pſalms, which are one hundred and fifty, were equivalent to five years of penance, and therefore twenty pſalters to one hundred years. It is amuſing enough at this day, and in a proteſtant country, to read that Dominic eaſily diſpatched this taſk in ſix days, and thus diſcharged ſome offenders for whom he had undertaken to do it. Once at the beginning of Lent, he deſired Damiani to impoſe upon him a thouſand

thouſand years of penance, and he very nearly finiſhed it before the end of the ſame Lent. Damiani alſo impoſed upon the archbiſhop of Milan a penance of an hundred years, which he redeemed by a ſum of money to be paid annually*. Though Peter Damiani was the great advocate for this ſyſtem of penance, he did not deny the novelty of it†.

Fleury acknowledges that when the penances were made impoſſible, on account of the multitude of them, they were obliged to have recourſe to compenſations and eſtimations, ſuch as theſe repetitions of pſalms, bowings, ſcourgings, alms, pilgrimages, &c. things, as he obſerves, that might be performed without converſion. However, in a national council in England, held in 747, penances performed by others were forbidden‡. This enormity was too great to be admitted even in theſe ignorant and licentious ages; but it muſt have gained ſome conſiderable ground before it was checked by public authority.

The monks becoming confeſſors contributed greatly to the ruin of eccleſiaſtical diſcipline. They, knowing nothing of the antient canons, introduced a certain *caſuiſtry* by which many crimes were excuſed, and abſolution was made eaſy in all caſes; no perſons being ever refuſed,

* Fleury, A. D. 1059. † Ib. vol. xiii. p. 100. ‡ Ib. p. 43.

or

or put off, after ever ſo many relapſes. This relaxed caſuiſtry is the moſt prevalent in thoſe countries in which the inquiſition is eſtabliſhed; where if a perſon does not make his confeſſion, and conſequently receive his abſolution, regularly, he is excommunicated. and at length declared ſuſpected of hereſy, and proſecuted according to law *.

Another thing that greatly promoted the ruin of diſcipline, and the encouragement of licentiouſneſs, in the middle ages, was the protection given to criminals who took refuge in churches, which was a cuſtom borrowed from paganiſm; this right of *Aſylum* being transferred from the heathen temples to chriſtian churches by the firſt chriſtian emperors. In the barbarous times of antiquity, the *rights of hoſpitality* were held ſo ſacred, that it was even deemed wrong to give up to public juſtice a criminal who had thrown himſelf under the protection of any perſon who was capable of ſcreening him. This privilege was, of courſe, extended to the temples, which were conſidered as the houſes of their Gods; and ſo ſacred was it eſteemed, that, in caſes of the greateſt criminality, all that it was thought lawful to do, was to take off the roof of the temple, and leave the wretch who had taken refuge in it to periſh with hunger and the inclemency of the weather.

* Fleury's eighth Diſcourſe, p. 42.

The

The abuſe of this rite of aſylum, when it was transferred to chriſtian churches, was complained of by Chryſoſtom, who perſuaded the emperor to revoke the privileges which had been granted by his predeceſſors. But they were reſtored, extended, and eſtabliſhed afterwards, eſpecially by Boniface V. in the ſeventh century*, and were the ſubject of great complaints in many countries, eſpecially in England, where the churches and church-yards were in a manner crowded with debtors and criminals of all kinds. Complaint being made on this ſubject in the time of Henry VII. the pope ordered that if any perſon who had taken refuge in an aſylum ſhould leave it, and commit a new crime, or repeat his old one, he ſhould be deprived of the privilege †. It muſt be obſerved, that croſſes on the public road, and various other things and places, which had the reputation of being *ſacred*, had, by degrees, got this privilege of aſylum, as well as churches. In later times, any criminal was ſafe from the purſuit of juſtice within the precincts of the palace of any cardinal; but Urban V. reformed that abuſe ‡.

Among the Jews the privilege of aſylum was a wiſe inſtitution, and came in aid of the principle of juſtice: as it only protected a perſon who pleaded that he had killed another inadver-

* Moſheim, vol. ii. p. 28. † Hiſt. des Papes, vol. iv. p. 273.
‡ Memoires pour la vie de Petrarch, vol. iii. p. 676.

tently

tently, ſo that the relations of the deceaſed could not hurt him, till a regular inquiry had been made into the fact; but he was delivered up to juſtice if it appeared that the murder was a wilful one. Beſides, this aſylum was not granted to the temple in particular, but to certain towns, moſt conveniently ſituated for that purpoſe, in different parts of the country.

Another ſource of great corruption in diſcipline was the abuſe of pilgrimages. Theſe were undertaken at firſt out of curioſity, or a natural reverence for any place that had been diſtinguiſhed by important tranſactions. They began to be common about the fourth century, and it appears by the writers of that time, that ſome weak people then valued themſelves on having ſeen ſuch places, and imagined that their prayers would be more favourably heard there than elſewhere. But in latter times much more ſtreſs was laid upon theſe things, and in the eighth century pilgrimages began to be enjoined by way of penance, and at length the pilgrimage was often a warlike expedition into the Holy Land, or ſervice in ſome other of the wars in which the ambition of the popes was intereſted. By this means all the uſe even of the pilgrimage itſelf, as a penance, was wholly loſt. For, as Mr. Fleury obſerves, a penitent marching alone was much more free from temptations to ſin than one who went to the

the wars in company; and ſome of theſe penitents even took dogs and horſes along with them, that they might take the diverſion of hunting in theſe expeditions *.

Solitary pilgrimages were, however, much in faſhion, and we find ſome very rigorous ones ſubmitted to by perſons of great eminence in thoſe ſuperſtitious times; when it was a maxim, that nothing contributed ſo much to the health of the ſoul, as the mortification of the body. In 997, an emperor of Germany by the advice of the monks went bare-foot to mount Garganus, famous for the ſuppoſed preſence of the arch-angel Michael, as a penance.

Before the eighth century it had been the cuſtom to confine penitents near the churches, where they had no opportunity of relapſing into their offences; but in this century pilgrimages, and eſpecially diſtant ones, began to be enjoined under the idea that penitents ſhould lead a *vagabond life*, like Cain. This, however, was ſoon abuſed; as, under this pretence, penitents wandered about naked, and loaded with irons, and therefore it was forbidden in the time of Charlemaigne. But ſtill it was the cuſtom to impoſe upon penitents pilgrimages of eſtabliſhed reputation, eſpecially that to the Holy Land,

* Fleury's ſixth Diſcourſe, p. 27.

to which there was a conſtant reſort from all parts of Europe. This was the foundation of the *Cruſades**.

Of all the conſequences of the Cruſades, the moſt important to religion was the diſcontinuance which they occaſioned of the antient canonical penance. For a man who was not able to ſerve in the Cruſades was allowed to have the ſame benefit by contributing to the expences of thoſe who did. Though the Cruſades are over, the canonical penances are not returned †.

Fleury alſo obſerves, that *plenary indulgences* had their origin with the Cruſades; for till then it had never been known that by any *ſingle work* the ſinner was held to be diſcharged from all the temporal puniſhments that might be due from the juſtice of God. Commutations of penance for pilgrimages to Rome, Compoſtella, or Jeruſalem, had been in uſe before, and to them, he ſays, the Cruſades added the dangers of war ‡. Beſides the wars againſt the Mahometans, the Cruſaders, in the courſe of their expeditions, had frequent differences with the Greek emperor; and then the preſervation of the Roman empire againſt the ſchiſmatical

* Fleury, vol. xiii. p. 22.

† Ib. p. 29. ‡ Ib. ſixth Diſcourſe, p. 6.

Greeks

Greeks was held to be as meritorious as fighting againſt the Turks themſelves; and this merit was ſoon applied to all wars which the popes eſteemed to be of importance to religion, eſpecially thoſe againſt heretics, as the Albigenſes in France*.

As it was the abuſe of indulgences that was the immediate cauſe of the reformation by Luther, it may be worth while to go a little back to conſider the riſe and progreſs of them. It has been obſerved in a former period, that all that was meant by *indulgencies* in the primitive times, was the relaxation of penance in particular caſes, eſpecially at the interceſſion of the confeſſors. From this ſmall beginning, the nature of it being at length quite changed, the abuſe grew to be ſo enormous, that it could no longer be ſupported; and the fall of it occaſioned the downfal of a great part of the papal power.

As an expreſſion of penitence and humiliation, a variety of penances, and ſome of them of a painful and whimſical nature, had been introduced into the diſcipline of the church. At firſt they were voluntary, but afterwards they were impoſed, and could not be diſpenſed with but by the leave of the biſhop, who often ſold

* Fleury's ſixth Diſcourſe, p. 16.

diſpenſations or indulgences, and thereby raiſed great ſums of money. In the twelfth century the popes, obſerving what a ſource of gain this was to the biſhops, limited their power, and by degrees drew the whole buſineſs of indulgences to Rome. And after remitting the temporal pains and penalties to which ſinners had been ſubjected, they went at length ſo far as to pretend to aboliſh the puniſhment due to wickedneſs in a future ſtate.

To complete this buſineſs, a *book of rates* was publiſhed, in which the ſums that were to be paid into the apoſtolical chamber for abſolution for particular crimes were preciſely ſtated. This practice entirely ſet aſide the uſe of the books called *Penitentials*, in which the penances annexed to each crime were regiſtered.

So long as nothing was pretended to be remitted but the temporal penances which it had been uſual to enjoin for certain offences, no great alarm was given, and no particular reaſon was thought neceſſary for the change; the payment of a ſum of money being a *temporal evil*, as well as bearing a number of laſhes, or walking bare-foot, &c. and this commutation was admitted with more eaſe, as it was pretended, that all the treaſure raiſed by this means was applied to ſacred uſes, and the benefit of the church. But when the popes pretended to remit the future

ture puniſhment of ſin, and to abſolve from the *guilt* of it, ſome other foundation was neceſſary; and this they pretended to find in the vaſt ſtock of merit which had accrued to the church from the good works of ſaints and martyrs, beſides what were neceſſary to inſure their own ſalvation. Theſe pretended merits ſtill belonged to the church, and formed *a treaſure*, which the popes had the power of diſpenſing. This doctrine was greatly improved and reduced into a ſyſtem by Thomas Aquinas. And afterwards, to the merits of the ſaints and martyrs were added, thoſe of Chriſt, as increaſing the treaſure of the church.

Among other things advanced by cardinal Cajetan in ſupport of the doctrine of indulgences, in his controverſy with Luther on the ſubject, he ſaid, that one drop of Chriſt's blood being ſufficient to redeem the whole human race, the remaining quantity that was ſhed in the garden, and upon the croſs, was left as a legacy to the church, to form a treaſure, from which indulgences were to be drawn, and adminiſtered by the Roman pontiffs *.

Though in this ſomething may be allowed to the heat of controverſy, the doctrine itſelf had a ſanction of a much higher authority. For

* Moſheim, vol. iii. p. 311.

Leo X. in 1518, decreed that the popes had the power of remitting both the crime and the puniſhment of ſin, the crime by the ſacrament of penance, and the temporal puniſhment by indulgences, the benefit of which extended to the dead as well as to the living; and that theſe indulgences are drawn from the ſuperabundance of the merits of Jeſus Chriſt and the ſaints, of which treaſure the pope is the diſpenſer *.

This Leo X. whoſe extravagance and expences had no bounds, had recourſe to theſe indulgences, among other methods of recruiting his exhauſted finances; and in the publication of them he promiſed the forgiveneſs of all ſins, paſt, preſent, or to come; and however enormous was their nature. Theſe he ſold by wholeſale to thoſe who endeavoured to make the moſt of them; ſo that paſſing, like other commodities, from one hand to another, they were even hawked about in the ſtreets by the common pedlars, who uſed the ſame artifices to raiſe the price of theſe commodities, as of any other in which they dealt.

One Texel, a Dominican friar, particularly diſtinguiſhed himſelf in puſhing the ſale of theſe indulgences. Among other things, in the ſer-

* Hiſtoire des Papes, vol. iv. p. 407.

mons

mons and ſpeeches which he made on this occaſion, he uſed to ſay, that, if a man had even lain with the mother of God, he was able, with the pope's power, to pardon the crime; and he boaſted that he had ſaved more ſouls from hell by theſe indulgences, than St. Peter had converted to chriſtianity by all his preaching*. There would be no end of reciting the blaſphemous pretenſions of the venders of theſe indulgences, with reſpect to the enormity of crimes, the number of perſons benefited by them, or the time to which they extended. Biſhop Burnet had ſeen an indulgence which extended to ten thouſand years. Sometimes indulgences were affixed to particular churches and altars, and to particular times or days, chiefly to the year of Jubilee. They are alſo affixed to ſuch things as may be carried about with a perſon, as *Agnus Dei's*, to medals, roſaries, or ſcapularies. They are alſo affixed to ſome prayers, the devout repetition of them being a means of procuring great indulgences. The granting of all theſe is left intirely to the diſcretion of the pope†.

Such ſcandalous exceſſes as theſe excited the indignation of Luther, who firſt preached againſt the abuſe of indulgences only, then, in conſequence of meeting with oppoſition, againſt in-

* Moſheim, vol. iii. p. 304. † Burnet on the Articles, p. 285.

dulgences themſelves, and at length againſt the papal power which granted them.

Before this time the council of Conſtance had, in ſome meaſure, reſtrained the abuſe of indulgences, and particularly had made void all thoſe that had been granted during the ſchiſm*. But it appears, that, notwithſtanding theſe reſtraints, the abuſes were greater than ever in the time of Leo X.

The council of Trent allowed of indulgences in general terms, but forbad the ſelling of them, and referred the whole to the diſcretion of the pope; ſo that, upon the whole, the abuſe was eſtabliſhed by this council. But though the reformation may not have produced any formal deciſions in the church of Rome againſt the abuſe of indulgences ſo as to affect the *doctrine* of them, the *practice* has been much moderated; and at preſent it does not appear that much more ſtreſs is laid upon ſuch things by catholics in general, than by proteſtants themſelves.

Some remains of the doctrine of indulgences are retained in the church of England, in which the biſhops have a power of diſpenſing with the marriage of perſons more near a kin than the law allows; which is, in fact, to excuſe what

* Lenfant, vol. i. p. 438.

they

they themſelves call the *crime of inceſt*. But there is ſomething much more unjuſtifiable in the power of *abſolution*, or an authoritative declaration of the forgiveneſs of ſin, which is alſo retained from the church of Rome. For after confeſſion, the prieſt is directed to abſolve a ſick perſon in this form of words: "Our Lord Jeſus "Chriſt, who has left power to his church to "abſolve all ſinners who truly repent and be- "lieve in him, of his great mercy forgive thee "thine offences; and by his authority com- "mitted to me, I abſolve thee from all thy ſin, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, "and of the Holy Ghoſt." This is exactly a popiſh abſolution, and is therefore liable to all the objections to which popiſh abſolutions and indulgences are liable. One that is not in prieſt's orders cannot pronounce this abſolution.

Whatever was meant by the power of abſolution communicated by Chriſt to the apoſtles, there is nothing ſaid in the New Teſtament of its being committed to the ordinary miniſters of the church, ſo that it muſt have been confined to the apoſtles only; and we have no example even of their exerciſing any ſuch authority as the church of Rome, or that of England pretends to. It is in vain to apologize for this form of abſolution, by ſaying that the pardon of ſin is only promiſed to the *penitent*, for then what occaſion was there for mentioning any power committed

mitted to the clergyman with reſpect to the a
ſolution, unleſs he be at leaſt ſuppoſed to knc
the heart, and thereby be enabled to judge wi
certainty whether any perſon be a true peniter
and a proper object of mercy, or not. If t
form has any meaning at all, it muſt imply th
it is in the power of the prieſt to abſolve, or n
to abſolve, as he ſhall think proper, which
certainly great preſumption and impiety.

In many other reſpects the diſcipline of t
church of England is very imperfect, and th
wiſeſt members of her communion, as well a
thoſe among the papiſts, lament the evil witho
ſeeing any proſpect of a remedy. The buſine
of auricular confeſſion, and alſo that of privat
penance, is entirely aboliſhed; but the *biſhop
courts* remain, which by mixing things of a civ
with thoſe of an eccleſiaſtical nature, are of grea
diſſervice to both. And whereas by the rules o
theſe courts, public penance is enjoined for cer
tain offences, perſons are allowed to commut
them for ſums of money.

SECTION III.

Of the Method of enforcing Church Cenſures, or the Hiſtory of Perſecution, till the Time of Auſtin.

HAVING traced the general courſe of church diſcipline, in all its changes, from the time of the apoſtles to the reformation, it may not be amiſs to go over the ſame ground once more, with a view to conſider the methods that have been from time to time taken, in order to enforce the cenſures of the church; and in this we ſhall have occaſion to lament, among other things, the moſt horrid abuſe of both eccleſiaſtical and civil power; while men were continually attempting to do by force what it is not in the power of force to do, viz. to guide the conſcience, or even to compel an outward conformity, in large bodies of people, to the ſame religious profeſſion. Of this interference of the civil power in the buſineſs of religion, we ſhall ſee the firſt ſteps in this period, in which a great deviation was made from the admirable ſimplicity of the rules laid down by our Saviour.

In order to prevent the progreſs of vice, and in any caſe to preſerve the reputation of chriſtian ſocieties, our Lord laid down a moſt excellent rule,

rule, as a general inſtruction for the conduct of his diſciples; namely, firſt to admoniſh an offending brother in the moſt private and prudent manner. If that was not effectual, one or two more were to give their ſanction to the reproof; if that failed, the caſe was to come under the cognizance of the whole congregation; and if the offender proved obſtinate and refractory in this laſt inſtance, he was to be expelled from the ſociety, in conſequence of which the church was diſcharged from all farther attention to his conduct, and he was conſidered in the ſame light as if he had never belonged to it. Such, and ſo admirably ſimple, and well adapted to its end, was the ſyſtem of diſcipline in the conſtitution of the chriſtian church; and for ſome time it was ſtrictly adhered to, and the effects of it were great and happy. By this means chriſtians effectually *watched one another in love, exhorting one another daily*, and not *ſuffering ſin in each other*. Thus alſo by forming regular bodies, they became more firmly united and attached to one another, and their zeal for the common cauſe was greatly increaſed.

Beſides admonition and reproof, private and public, the primitive chriſtians had no method of enforcing the obſervance of chriſtian duties. If this failed, nothing remained but *excommunication*, or cutting off the vicious or refractory member from any viſible relation to them, or connection

connection with them. And, indeed, conſidering the valuable advantages reſulting to every particular member from the reſt of the body, a formal excluſion, and as it neceſſarily muſt have been, an ignominious excluſion, from a chriſtian ſociety, could not but have been regarded, even without any ſuperſtition, as a very awful thing.

It was generally concluded, that the cenſures of the church, paſſed in a ſolemn and unanimous manner, would be ratified at the tribunal of Chriſt at the laſt day; ſo that a perſon cut off from the communion of the church here, would be excluded from heaven hereafter. And, indeed, if a man's conduct were ſuch as expoſed him to this cenſure of his fellow chriſtians, of whoſe kindneſs and affection he had abundant experience, and when they were under no bias or prejudice in giving their judgment, it is probable that it would be juſt, and therefore be ratified in heaven; and we may preſume that, in the primitive times this was generally the caſe; though it muſt be acknowledged that even a whole church may judge uncharitably and raſhly, and in this caſe their cenſures certainly will not be ratified at the righteous tribunal of God.

Excommunications became much more dreadful, when, in the progreſs of ſuperſtition, the participation of religious rites, and eſpecially that

that of the Lord's ſupper, came to be conſidered as a neceſſary qualification for the favour of God and the happineſs of heaven, an opinion which prevailed in very early times.

Whatever was the *cauſe*, the *effect* of church cenſures in thoſe times was very extraordinary. It was cuſtomary, as we have ſeen, for perſons under ſentence of excommunication to attend at the doors of the church with all the marks of the deepeſt dejection and contrition, intreating the miniſters and people with tears in their eyes, and earneſtly begging their prayers, and reſtoration to the peace of the church.

eight months, and was not received into the church till after the moſt humble confeſſion of his offence, and giving the moſt undeniable proof of his ſincerity.

I muſt add, that whenever a perſon was excommunicated in any particular church, it was generally deemed wrong to admit him to communion in any other. Sometimes, however, neighbouring churches, being well acquainted with the cauſe of excommunication, and not approving of it, received into their communion the perſons ſo ſtigmatized. And when the regular ſubordination of one church to another was eſtabliſhed, it was cuſtomary for the excommunicated perſon to appeal from the ſentence of his particular church to a higher tribunal. Many of theſe appeals were made to the church of Rome, from other churches not regularly ſubordinate to it, which laid the firſt foundation of the exorbitant power of that church.

When chriſtians began to debate about *opinions*, and to divide and ſubdivide themſelves on that account, it is to be lamented, but not to be wondered at, that they laid an undue ſtreſs on what they deemed to be the *right faith*, and that they ſhould apply church cenſures in order to prevent the ſpreading of heretical opinions; without waiting till they could judge by obſervation what effect ſuch opinions had on the temper and general

general conduct of men, and indeed without conſidering that influence at all. The firſt remarkable abuſe of the power of excommunication in this way is by no means ſuch as recommends it, being ſuch as would now be deemed the moſt frivolous and unjuſtifiable that can well be imagined. For on the account of nothing more than a difference of opinion and practice with reſpect to the time of celebrating Eaſter, Victor, biſhop of Rome, excommunicated at once all the eaſtern churches. But this was reckoned a moſt daring piece of inſolence and arrogance, for which he was ſeverely reproved by other biſhops; nor, indeed, was any regard paid to the cenſure. It muſt be obſerved that, in conſequence of appeals being made from inferior churches to the patriarchal ones, theſe took upon them to extend their excommunications beyond the limits of their acknowledged juriſdiction, viz. to all who held any obnoxious opinion or practice. Perſons thus cenſured often formed ſeparate churches, and in return excommunicated thoſe who had excommunicated them.

In this ſtate of mutual hoſtility things often continued a long time, till the influence of an emperor, or ſome other foreign circumſtance determined the diſpute in favour of one of them, which was thenceforth deemed the *orthodox* ſide of the queſtion, whilſt the other was condemned as *heretical*. It is well known that the Arians and

and Athanaſians were in this manner reputed orthodox by turns; as both had the ſanction of councils, and emperors in their favour; till, in conſequence of mere faction, and the authority of the emperors, the party of Athanaſius prevailed at laſt.

The firſt inſtance that we meet with of the uſe of actual *force*, or rather of a deſire to make uſe of it, by a chriſtian church, was in the proceedings againſt Paul biſhop of Samoſata; when, at the requeſt of a chriſtian ſynod, the heathen emperor Aurelian, expelled him from the epiſcopal houſe*. Indeed, having been depoſed from his office, if that had been done by competent authority, namely, that of his own dioceſe, he could not be ſaid to have any right to the emoluments of it, and therefore his keeping poſſeſſion of the epiſcopal houſe was an act of violence on his ſide.

But as ſoon as the empire became what is called chriſtian, we have examples enow of the interference of civil power in matters of religion; and we ſoon find inſtances of the abuſe of excommunication, and the addition of civil incapacities annexed to that eccleſiaſtical cenſure. In a council held at Ptolemais in Cyrene, Andronicus the prefect was excommunicated, and it was expreſſed

* Fleury's ſeventh Diſcourſe, p. 7.

in the ſentence, that no temple of God ſhould be open unto him, that no one ſhould ſalute him during his life, and that he ſhould not be buried after his death*.

The emperor Conſtantine, beſides baniſhing Arius himſelf, ordering his writings to be burnt, and forbidding any perſons to conceal him under pain of death, deprived many of thoſe who were declared heretics of the privileges which he had granted to chriſtians in general, and beſides impoſing fines upon them, forbad their aſſemblies, and demoliſhed their places of worſhip. On the other hand, the emperor Conſtantius baniſhed the orthodox biſhops becauſe they would not condemn Athanaſius. Neſtorius was baniſhed by Theodoſius, in whoſe reign perſecution for the ſake of religion made greater advances than in any other within this period. He certainly imagined he made a right uſe of the power with which God had entruſted him, by employing it in eſtabliſhing what he thought to be the orthodox faith, without ever reflecting on the impropriety of ſuch a *means* with reſpect to ſuch an *end*.

Immediately upon his baptiſm, which, according to the ſuperſtitious notions which influenced many perſons of that age, he had deferred till his life was in danger by ſickneſs, he publiſhed a de-

* Sueur, A. D. 411.

cree

cree commanding that, "in order that all his ſub-
"jects ſhould make profeſſion of the ſame reli-
"gion which the divine apoſtle Peter taught the
"Romans, the doctrine of the Trinity ſhould be
"embraced by thoſe who would be called *catho-*
"*lics*; that all others," whom he ſays he judged to be *mad*, "ſhould bear the infamous name of
"*heretics*, and that their aſſemblies ſhould not be
"called *churches*, reſerving their farther puniſh-
"ment in the firſt place to the vengeance of hea-
"ven, and afterwards to the movements with
"which God ſhould inſpire him*." In conſequence, I ſuppoſe of one of theſe *movements*, three years after this edict, he publiſhed another, forbidding the Arians to hold their aſſemblies in cities. He however, was not the perſon who was inſpired with the glorious thought of ſentencing all the heretics to be burned alive. This was reſerved for a more advanced ſtate of the chriſtian church.

It was of a ſon of Theodoſius, viz. the eaſtern emperor Honorius, that the authority of perſecution to death was obtained, by four biſhops ſent from Carthage for that purpoſe in 410; and the edict extended to all who differed ever ſo little from the catholic faith†. But it does not appear that this ſanguinary decree was carried into execution.

* Sueur, A. D. 378.
† Taylor on the Grand Apoſtacy, p. 131.

Notwithſtanding all the hardſhips which the chriſtians had lately ſuffered from the pagans, and the juſt remonſtrances they had made on the ſubject, no ſooner were they in poſſeſſion of the ſame power, than they were too ready to make a ſimilar uſe of it; and inſtead of ſhewing the world the contraſt of a truly chriſtian ſpirit, they were eager to retaliate upon their enemies, whom they now had at their mercy. But at firſt the number of the pagans was too great to make very violent proceedings at all prudent. As the chriſtians increaſed in number the pagans were ſoon laid under great reſtrictions.

In the year 346, it was decreed that all the heathen temples in cities ſhould be ſhut up, but that thoſe in the villages ſhould not be meddled with; the chriſtians having increaſed more in the cities, and ſuperſtition, as might be expected, retaining its hold on the minds of men much longer in the villages, where they had leſs intercourſe with ſtrangers, and conſequently leſs opportunity of receiving information. It was in this ſtate of things that the heathens began to be diſtinguiſhed by the name of *Pagans* (*Pagani*) that is, inhabitants of villages. In the year 382, theſe pagans were laid under farther reſtrictions: for though they were allowed to frequent their temples as uſual, they were not ſuffered to make any ſacrifices there. At the ſame time, however, the clandeſtine aſſemblies of the Manicheans were abſolutely forbidden.

Even

Even the more learned chriſtians, who might have been expected, by reflections upon the paſt, to have ſeen things in a juſter light, and to have entertained more liberal ſentiments, ſoon became the advocates for the interference of civil power in matters of religion. Auſtin, the oracle of the church in his own time, and ſtill more ſo after his death, confeſſed that he had formerly been of opinion that heretics ſhould not be harraſſed by catholics, but rather allured by all kinds of gentle methods; yet afterwards he changed his opinion, having learned by experience, that the laws made by the emperors againſt heretics had proved the happy occaſion of their converſion*. His whole *Epiſtle to Vincentius*, where we learn this, is well worth reading, as being perhaps the firſt piece in which the uſe of force in matters of religion is pleaded for. He certainly meant well by it.

As one great ſource of information is by means of books, all thoſe whoſe wiſh it has been to prevent the ſpreading of any particular opinion, have generally done every thing in their power to ſuppreſs the books that recommend it. The heathens made frequent attempts to compel the chriſtians to give up their ſacred books; but the firſt example of any thing of this kind by chriſtians (except what is mentioned above concerning the writings of Arius) was exhibited by Theodoſius,

* Opera, vol. ii. p. 174.

who in 448 made a law, by which it was ordered, that all the books, the doctrine of which was not conformable to the councils of Nice and Epheſus, and alſo to the deciſions of Cyril, ſhould be deſtroyed, and the concealers of them put to death. Afterwards pope Gelaſius, in a council held at Rome in 494, ſpecified the books which the church of Rome rejected, but without laying any penalty on thoſe who ſhould read them*.

So far thoſe who were in poſſeſſion of power, and who were inſtigated by bigotry, went in theſe early times. We ſhall ſee a much greater extenſion of this, as well as of every other method of preventing and extirpating hereſy, in the following period.

* Fleury's ſeventh Diſcourſe, p. 24.

SECTION

SECTION IV.

Of the Methods of enforcing eccleſiaſtical Cenſures from the Time of Auſtin to the Reformation and afterwards by the Catholics.

WE are now launching into what has been properly enough called the *dark age* of this weſtern part of the world; and we ſhall not be ſurprized to find *bigotry* and *violence* keep pace with *ignorance*, and that they ſhould not be leſſened but by the increaſe of knowledge and but very ſlowly even then.

As, upon the converſion of the barbarous nations to chriſtianity, the biſhops became ſome of the moſt conſiderable land owners, in conſequence of which they had a right to ſit in their parliaments, to hold courts, and even to ſerve in the wars, there neceſſarily aroſe an unnatural mixture of civil and eccleſiaſtical power, the ſame perſon ſerving in both capacities. Since all public concerns, of a ſpiritual as well as a temporal nature, were frequently diſcuſſed in theſe parliaments, or aſſemblies of the ſtates, regulations of all kinds, eccleſiaſtical as well as others, were enforced by civil penalties.

By this means *compulſory penances* were introduced in the ſeventh century, when we find proofs

of their being in Spain. There the biſhops, finding offenders refuſing to ſubmit to penance, complained to their parliament, and requeſted their princes to interpoſe their temporal power. The puniſhments that were enjoined in this manner, were prohibitions to eat fleſh, to wear linen, to mount a horſe, &c*. It would have been happy if civil power had proceeded no farther than this in matters of religion, and had extended to no other caſes.

In this period the ſentence of excommunication became a much more dreadful thing than it had been before, and a proportionably greater ſolemnity was added to the forms of it. The moſt ſolemn part of the new ceremonial was the extinction of lamps or candles, by throwing them on the ground, with a ſolemn imprecation, that the perſon againſt whom the excommunication was pronounced, might in like manner, be extinguiſhed, or deſtroyed by the judgment of God. And becauſe the people were ſummoned to attend this ceremony by the ſound of a bell, and thecurſes accompanying the excommunication were recited out of a book, while the perſon who pronouced them ſtood on ſome balcony or ſtage, from which he would throw down his lights, we have the phraſe of *curſing by bell, book, and candle.* The firſt example of excommunication by throw-

* Fleury, vol. xiii. p. 44.

ing

ing down lighted lamps was at Rheims, about the year 900, when the biſhops excommunicated ſome murderers in this manner *.

When hereſies ſprung up in the church, and there were many other offenders who were out of the reach of church power, it came to be the cuſtom to pronounce theſe curſes againſt them on certain days of the year, and we find Thurſday before Eaſter made choice of for this purpoſe. Thus we read that John XXII. according to the cuſtom of the church of Rome, on the Thurſday before Eaſter, publiſhed a bull, by which he excommunicated the poor of Lyons (or the Albigenſes) the Arnoldiſts, and all heretics in general, the Corſairs, the falſifiers of apoſtolical bulls, and all who uſurped the city of Rome, or the patrimony of St. Peter †.

At length ſentences of general excommunication becoming frequent (every decretal, though the ſubject of it was ever ſo trifling, denouncing this ſentence againſt all who ſhould diſobey it) and conſequently whole claſſes of men, and ſometimes whole communities, falling under thoſe cenſures, they came to be deſpiſed and loſt their effect ‡.

Leonardo Aretino, who wrote before the reformation, obſerves, in his hiſtory of Florence,

* Jortin's Remarks, vol. iv. p. 518.
† Hiſt. des Papes, vol. iv p. 12. ‡ Fleury's tenth Diſcourſe, p. 65.

book

book iv. p. 77, that when the citizens had been uſed to the papal cenſures, they did not much regard the interdicts they were laid under; eſpecially as they obſerved that they were not decreed for any good reaſon, but depended on the will of thoſe who had moſt influence with the popes. And in the year 1377, when the city was laid under an interdict, public orders were given to the clergy to pay no reſpect to it *.

When the paſſions of eccleſiaſtics were much intereſted, they were not content with mere church cenſures; but, having the ſanction of the civil power, they annexed the moſt dreadful civil penalties to their excommunications. Theſe were eaſily introduced after the Roman empire became chriſtian, and in many of the imperial conſtitutions made after that event, we find various civil diſqualifications, ſome of which were mentioned in the former period, added to the cenſures of the church. But the whole ſyſtem of this mixed eccleſiaſtical and civil polity received freſh and ſtronger ſanctions upon the converſion of the Germans, Goths, Celts, and other northern nations. Theſe people had been uſed to excommunication in their own pagan religions; and the conſequence of it had always been the moſt dreadful civil penalties and diſabilities. Among the Gauls, excommunicated perſons had been looked upon as wicked and ſcandalous wretches;

* P. 172.

all

all people avoided their company, they were not allowed the benefits of the courts of juſtice, nor were they admitted to any poſt of honour or profit in the community.

Of this prejudice of the people the chriſtian prieſts willingly took advantage, as by this means they could overawe thoſe who deſpiſed mere church cenſures. Civil penalties for offences againſt the church were increaſed by degrees, till hereſy came to be conſidered as a crime of ſo heinous a nature, that *burning alive* was decreed to be, of all others, the moſt proper puniſhment of it. We do not indeed, wonder to find that, of all crimes, the church, which had ſo much at ſtake, ſhould be moſt alarmed at that of *hereſy*, and therefore ſhould apply what might be thought to be the moſt effectual remedy and the moſt likely to terrify thoſe who ſhould be expoſed to it.

It is, however, curious enough to obſerve that, as there could be no pretence for eccleſiaſtics, *as ſuch*, having recourſe to civil penalties, or according to the uſual phraſe, making uſe of the *temporal ſword*; whenever it was thought neceſſary that any criminals againſt the church ſhould be puniſhed with death, they were ſolemnly delivered over to the civil power. In the council of Lateran in 1179, which was before any heretics were puniſhed with death, it is ſaid that, "though the church rejects bloody executions,

"it

" it may nevertheleſs be aided by the laws of " chriſtian princes, and that the fear of corporeal " puniſhments often makes perſons have recourſe " to ſpiritual remedies*." And to this day the court of Inquiſition not only ſolemnly delivers over to the civil power all thoſe who are deſtined to ſuffer death, but even formally recommends them to mercy, where it is certainly not the wiſh of thoſe who expreſs this concern for them, that they ſhould find any.

Among other methods of trying whether a perſon was a heretic, we find, in theſe dark ages, one of the ordeals of the northern nations, and the ſame that till of late years, was thought to be the proper teſt of witch-craft in this country. For, in the perſecution of the Albigenſes, in order to know whether a perſon was a heretic, thoſe who ſuſpected him threw him into water, on the ſuppoſition that, if he was a heretic, the devil within him being lighter than the water, would prevent his ſinking†. But as I have obſerved before, the puniſhment that was thought to be the moſt proper for hereſy, was burning alive; and indeed this was the firſt capital puniſhment that was decreed for it. There was not, however, any proper capital puniſhment for hereſy, till the year 1215, when it was appointed by the fourth council of Lateran, that all here-

* Hiſtoire des Papes, vol iii. p. 90.

† Baſnage Hiſtoire des Egliſes Reformées vol. i. p. 229.

tics

tics ſhould be delivered over to the civil magiſtrate to be burned.

This peculiarly dreadful puniſhment, ſeems to have been thought the moſt proper for hereſy, from the interpretation that was given of John xv. 6. as may be inferred from a bull of John XXIII. quoted by L'Enfant in his *Hiſtory of the Council of Piſa*, vol. ii. p. 98, in which he ſays, "We ordain that they be publicly burned, "in execution of the ſentence of our Saviour, "John xv. 6. *If any man abide not in me, he is "caſt forth as a branch, and is withered; and "men gather them, and caſt them forth into the "fire, and they are burned.*" The church of Rome, having once employed this horrid engine, found it ſo well adapted to the reſt of her ſyſtem, and ſo neceſſary to enforce a regard to decrees not recommended by reaſon or argument, that ſhe had frequent recourſe to it; and though this was the greateſt of all abuſes of eccleſiaſtical authority, it was retained along with other corruptions of chriſtianity, by moſt of the firſt reformers.

The burning of heretics was not, however, the firſt kind of perſecution which the church of Rome employed to ſubdue her enemies; and recourſe was not had to this, till other methods, and even ſeveral of a very violent kind, had been tried without effect. The firſt object that rouſed the

the ſanguinary diſpoſition of the court of Rome, was the hereſies as they were called, of the Waldenſes, and of the Albigenſes, the former of whom inhabited ſome of the mountainous parts of the Alps, and the latter the ſouthern provinces of France.

Theſe people were dreadfully perſecuted by Innocent III. who firſt prohibited all manner of intercourſe or communication with them, confiſcated their goods, diſinherited their children, deſtroyed their houſes, denied them the rite of ſepulchre, and gave their accuſers one third of their effects. But in 1198, he erected the court of *Inquiſition*, the object of which was the utter extirpation of them, in which Dominic was the chief actor. Afterwards he publiſhed Cruſades againſt them, promiſing all who would engage in that war, the ſame indulgences that had been granted to thoſe who engaged in the expeditions for the recovery of the Holy Land. In conſequence of this, great multitudes of them were deſtroyed with all manner of cruelties.

This war, or rather maſſacre, continued near forty years, and a million of men are ſuppoſed to have loſt their lives in it. And of theſe, it is ſaid, there were three hundred thouſand of the Cruſaders themſelves*. However, the conſequence

* Hiſtoire des Papes, vol. iii. p. 16.

of

of this perſecution was the ſame with that of moſt others; the reprobated opinion being farther diſſeminated by this means. Particularly, the kings of England, and the earls of Thouloufe (who had been the heads of the Albigenſes) being related many of them came over into England, where great numbers embraced their opinions. They were afterwards imbibed by Wickliffe, and from him they paſſed into Bohemia.

Perhaps the moſt horrible and perfidious of any ſingle act of barbarity, committed by the papiſts, was the maſſacre of the proteſtants in Paris, on the eve of St. Bartholomew, in 1536; when the Hugonots (as the proteſtants in France are called) were lulled aſleep by all the forms of pacification, and an attempt was made to riſe upon them, and deſtroy them all in one night. In Paris, and ſome other towns, it took effect, and great numbers were maſſacred when they were altogether unapprehenſive of danger. Had this happened in a popular tumult, it would have been more excuſable; but it was not only a moſt deliberate act of perfidy, concerted long before the time of execution, but the king himſelf, Charles IX. bore a part in it, firing upon his own ſubjects from his window; and pope Gregory XIII. gave ſolemn thanks to God for this maſſacre in the church of St. Louis, whither he himſelf went in proceſſion. The guns of St. Angelo

Angelo were alſo fired, and bonfires were made in the ſtreets of Rome upon the occaſion *.

The court of Rome has even employed the ſame bloody methods to extirpate hereſies that aroſe among the catholics themſelves, thoſe who maintained them adhering to the popiſh ſyſtem in general. This was the caſe with reſpect to ſome Franciſcans in the fourteenth century, who maintained, that neither Chriſt, nor the apoſtles had any perſonal property. This moſt innocent opinion was moſt vehemently oppoſed by the Dominicans; and John XXII. in 1324, pronounced it to be a peſtilential, erroneous, damnable, and blaſphemous doctrine, ſubverſive of the catholic faith; and he declared all thoſe who adhered to it obſtinate heretics, and rebels againſt the church. In conſequence of this mercileſs decree, great numbers of thoſe poor Franciſcans were apprehended by the Dominican inquiſitors, and committed to the flames †.

It would be unjuſt, however, to ſuppoſe that all the members of the *catholic church*, as it is called, have been equally bent on the extirpation of heretics by theſe violent methods. At all times there have been advocates for moderation among very zealous papiſts. Thomas Aquinas, who for many centuries was eſteemed

* Hiſtoire des Papes, vol. v. p. 28. † Moſheim, vol. iii. p. 178.

the

the bulwark of the popiſh cauſe, maintained that religion ought not to be extended by force; alleging that no perſon can believe as he would, and that the will ſhould not be forced*. There were alſo thoſe who remonſtrated very ſtrongly againſt all the perſecutions of the proteſtants by the papiſts, eſpecially thoſe of Philip II. of Spain, as well as thoſe of Louis XIV. of France. And there is reaſon to believe that the minds of the catholics in general are now ſo much enlightened, partly by reflection, but chiefly by experience, that they would no more act the ſame things over again, than the proteſtants would, who, as will be ſeen in the next ſection, were guilty of almoſt as great exceſſes in proportion to the extent of their power.

As we are naturally more intereſted in our own hiſtory, I ſhall mention a few more particulars concerning the progreſs of perſecution in this country. There were no penal ſtatutes againſt hereſy, enacted by the authority of an Engliſh parliament, before the fifth year of Richard II. in 1382; when it was appointed, that heretics ſhould be kept in priſon "till they "juſtified themſelves according to law, and the "reaſon of holy church." The commitment was to be the rule for the chancellor, after the biſhop had preſented the name of the offender.

* Fleury's ſixth Diſcourſe, p. 32.

Afterwards Henry IV. in order to gai
good will of the clergy, procured an act, i
ſecond year of his reign, 1400, by which
victed heretics might be impriſoned and
fined at the diſcretion of the dioceſan, or c
commiſſary, and thoſe who refuſed to al
or who relapſed, were to be burnt to dea
ſome conſpicuous place before the people.
this law all heretics were left to the mercy
biſhops in the ſpiritual courts, who might
priſon them or put them to death, without
ſentment or trial by a jury, as was the pr
in all other criminal caſes.

The reign of his ſon Henry V. whoſ
tereſt it was to keep things quiet at hom
obliging the clergy, while he was carryi
his wars abroad, was very unfavourable t
inquiry. In the beginning of his reign
an act was made againſt the Lollards or V
liffites, by which it was decreed that they ſ
forfeit all their lands and goods to the kin
this reign, however, it was that the w
hæretico comburendo was iſſued from the
cery; by which it ſeems that the heretics
taken again into the king's protection.
this does not appear to have been nec
or at leaſt to have been practiſed, for no
writs are to be found upon the rolls befo
reign of Henry VIII. By virtue of thei
tutes, the clergy exerciſed numberleſs cr

upon the people, there being hundreds of examples of perſons impriſoned, and probably put to death, by them*.

The prohibition of books was an evil that was greatly increaſed after the reformation, though it began before. There were rigorous edicts againſt the writings of Wickliffe and John Huſs. But Leo X. renewed them in condemning the propoſitions of Luther, and all the books that bore his name. He made a decree that no book ſhould be publiſhed in Rome, or in any other city or dioceſe, before it had been approved by an officer appointed for that purpoſe; and he was the firſt who made any decree of this nature†. The popes that ſucceeded him, forbad under pain of excommunication, the reading of all the books of heretics; and in order to diſtinguiſh them, Philip II. ordered the Spaniſh inquiſition to print a catalogue of them, which Paul IV. alſo did at Rome; at the ſame time ordering them to be burnt‡. In 1597, Clement VIII. publiſhed another catalogue of books prohibited, and among them was Junius's tranſlation of the Old Teſtament, and Beza's of the New, though the former might, at the diſcretion of the biſhop, be granted to learned men.

* Neale's Hiſtory of the Puritans, vol. i. p. 5.
† Hiſtoire des Papes, vol. iv. p. 389.
‡ Baſnage, vol. iii. p. 465. Hiſtoire des Papes, vol. iv. p. 634.

SECTION V.

Of Perſecution by Proteſtants.

I HAVE already obſerved, th ſanguinary method of propagating and eſt ing religion was adopted, together with popiſh maxims by the reformers; and al hiſtory of all reformed countries bears too evidence of it.

In the wars of Bohemia, both the prot and papiſts agreed that it was lawful to pate with fire and ſword, all enemies *true religion.* The proteſtants acknow that *heretics* were worthy of capital puniſ but they denied that John Huſs was a h Ziſka, the general of the Huſſites, fell the ſect of the Beghards in 1421, and pu of them to the ſword, and condemned t to the flames, a puniſhment which they with the moſt chearful fortitude *.

Luther had no idea of the impropri civil penalties to enforce the true religion only objected to the putting heretics to but approved of their being confined, as

* Moſheim, vol. iii. p. 261. 274.

men. He perſuaded the elector of Saxony not to tolerate the followers of Zuinglius, merely becauſe he did not believe the real preſence of Chriſt in the euchariſt; and the Lutheran lawyers condemned to death Peter Poſtellus for being a Zuinglian. They alſo put to death ſeveral anabaptiſts *. It was not till towards the end of the ſeventeenth century that the Lutherans adopted the leading maxim which, Moſheim ſays, had been peculiar to the Arminians, that no good ſubject was juſtly puniſhable by the magiſtrates for his religious opinions †.

Moſheim alſo ſays, that Zuinglius is ſaid to have attributed to the civil magiſtrate ſuch an extenſive power in eccleſiaſtical affairs, as is inconſiſtent with the eſſence and genius of religion ‡. He condemned an anabaptiſt to be drowned, with this cruel inſult, *Qui iterum merget mergatur; He that dips a ſecond time, let him be dipped* §.

Calvin went upon the ſame plan, perſecuting many worthy perſons, and even procuring Servetus to be burned alive for writing againſt the doctrine of the Trinity. He alſo wrote a treatiſe in order to prove the lawfulneſs of putting heretics to death; and in one of his letters he

* Chandler's Hiſtory of Perſecution, p. 311.
† Vol. iv. p. 440. ‡ Ib. iii. p. 320.
§ Chandler's Hiſtory of Perſecution, p. 328.

ſays, "Since the papiſts, in order to vindicate "their own ſuperſtitions, cruelly ſhed innocent "blood, it is a ſhame that a chriſtian magiſtrate "ſhould have no courage at all in the defence "of certain truth." Even Melancthon, though eſteemed to be of a mild and moderate temper, approved of the death of Servetus*.

After the reformation in England, the laws againſt heretics were not relaxed, but the proceedings were appointed to be regular, as in other criminal caſes. Thus it was enacted in 1534, that heretics ſhould be proceeded againſt upon preſentment by a jury, or on the oath of two witneſſes at leaſt†.

When the new liturgy was confirmed by act of parliament in the reign of Edward VI. in 1548, it was ordered that ſuch of the clergy as refuſed to conform to it, ſhould, upon the firſt conviction, ſuffer ſix months impriſonment, and forfeit a year's income of their benefices; for the ſecond offence they ſhould forfeit all their church preferments, and ſuffer a year's impriſonment; and for the third offence impriſonment for life. They who ſhould write or print any thing againſt the book were fined ten pounds for the firſt offence, twenty for the ſecond, with

* Chandler's Hiſt. p. 321, 323.
† Neale's Hiſt. p. 10.

forfeiture

forfeiture of all their goods; and impriſonment for life for the third*.

Cranmer, whilſt he was a Lutheran, conſented to the burning of John Lambert and Ann Aſkew, for thoſe very doctrines for which he himſelf ſuffered afterwards; and when he was a ſacramentarian he was the cauſe of the death of Joan Bocher, an Arian, importuning the young king Edward VI. to ſign the death warrant; and he is ſaid to have done it with great reluctance, ſaying, with tears in his eyes, that if he did wrong, it was in ſubmiſſion to his authority (Cranmer's) and that he ſhould anſwer to God for it.

Many were the ſeverities under which the Puritans laboured in the reign of queen Elizabeth, and the princes of the Stuart family; and the Preſbyterians were but too ready to act with a high hand in their turn, in the ſhort time that they were in power; but they were ſoon repaid with intereſt on the reſtoration. At the revolution they obtained pretty good terms, but ſtill all thoſe who could not ſubſcribe the doctrinal articles of the church of England remained ſubject to the ſame penalties as before, and a new and ſevere law was made againſt the Antitrinitarians, This law, which ſubjects the of-

* Neale's Hiſtory, p. 39.

fender to confiſcation of goods and impriſonment for life, if he perſiſts in acting contrary to the law, ſtill remains in force, though many other hardſhips under which Diſſenters formerly laboured have lately been removed.

The perſecution of the Remonſtrants by the Calviniſtic party in Holland was as rancorous in the mode of carrying it on, as any of the popiſh perſecutions, though the penalties did not extend beyond baniſhment.

All the proteſtant churches have been too ready to impoſe their own faith upon others, and to bind all their poſterity to believe as they did. But the moſt remarkable public act of this kind occurs in the hiſtory of the proteſtant church in France. At a ſynod held in 1612, it was decreed, that they who take holy orders ſhould take this oath. "I whoſe name is here "under written, do receive and approve the "confeſſion of faith of the reformed churches in "this kingdom, and alſo promiſe to perſevere "in it until death, and to believe and teach "agreeably thereunto*." In another decree, paſſed in 1620, they adopt the decrees of the ſynod of Dort, promiſing to perſevere in that faith all their lives, and to defend it to the utmoſt of their power †. Is it to be regretted that

* Quick's Synodicon, vol. i. p. 348. † Ib. vol. ii. p. 38.

a church,

a church, the principles of which were ſo narrow and intolerant, ſhould, in the courſe of divine providence, be ſuppreſſed? It is to be hoped that when it ſhall ſeem fit to the ſame wiſe providence to revive the proteſtant intereſt in that country, it will be more liberal, and more deſerving of the name of a *reformed chriſtian* church.

There is too great a mixture of civil penalties in the ordinary diſcipline of the church of England to this day. According to her canons, every perſon who maintains any thing contrary to the doctrine or rites of the church, or the authority by which they are enforced, is declared to be *ipſo facto* excommunicated. Many other offences, which are properly civil, are deemed to be of a ſpiritual nature, and are puniſhed by excommunication; which is two-fold, the greater and the leſs. The latter only excludes a man from the ſacrament, and communion in the divine offices; but the greater excommunication cuts a man off from all commerce with chriſtians in temporal affairs; ſo that, if the orders of the church were univerſally and ſtrictly obſerved, the poor wretch muſt neceſſarily periſh; ſince no perſon in the nation might ſell him food, raiment, or any convenience whatever.

SECTION

SECTION VI.

The Hiſtory of Miſtakes concerning moral Virtue.

NOT only did the chriſtian church adopt very wrong and pernicious maxims of church diſcipline, but chriſtians have alſo adopted very falſe and hurtful notions concerning *moral virtue* itſelf, which is the end of all diſcipline; and it may be uſeful to take a general view of theſe corruptions, as well as of others.

According to the genuine doctrine of reaſon and revelation, nothing is of any avail to recommend a man to the favour of God, and to inſure his future happineſs, beſides good diſpoſitions of mind, and a habit and conduct of life agreeable to them. This is the religion of nature, and likewiſe that of the Old and New Teſtaments. But the religion of the heathen world, and that of many of the Jews, in the time of our Saviour, was of a quite different ſtamp. The heathens, having none but low notions of their Gods, had no idea of recommending themſelves to their favour, but by the punctual obſervance of certain rites, ceremonies, and modes of worſhip, which at beſt had no relation to moral virtue, and often conſiſted in the moſt horrid and ſhameful violation of the plaineſt natural duties.

The

The phariſaical Jews, alſo, overlooking the excellent nature of the moral precepts of their Law, and the perfect character of the great Being whom they were taught to worſhip, and directed to reſemble, attached themſelves wholly to ritual obſervances. Upon theſe, and on their relation to their anceſtor Abraham, they chiefly depended for inſuring to themſelves the favour of God, to the utter excluſion of all the gentile world, whatever might be their characters in a moral reſpect.

Our Lord and his apoſtles took every opportunity of oppoſing this fundamental corruption of genuine religion, and recalled mens attention to their hearts and lives. And one would have though that, by the abolition of all the peculiar rites of the Jewiſh law, and appointing none in their place (beſides baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper, which are exceedingly ſimple, and have obvious moral uſes) an effectual bar would have been put in the way of the old ſuperſtitions. But human nature being the ſame, and men's diſlike to moral virtue operating as before, and making them ready to adopt ſuperſtitious obſervances as a compenſation for it, *pretences* and *modes* were not long wanting; and at length proper moral virtue was as effectually excluded in the chriſtian religion, as ever it had been in corrupt Judaiſm, or heatheniſm itſelf; and as great ſtreſs was laid upon things that bore no relation to moral virtue, but were in fact, inconſiſtent with it, and ſubverſive of it, as had ever been

been done by the moſt ſuperſtitious and miſinformed of mankind.

Did not both the moſt authentic hiſtory, and even the preſent ſtate of religion in the church of Rome, furniſh ſufficient vouchers of this, it would, not, in the preſent enlightened age, be even credible, that ſuch practices as I ſhall be obliged to mention, could ever have been uſed by chriſtians, as methods of recommending themſelves to God.

We find that in early times an undue ſtreſs was laid upon the ordinances of *baptiſm* and the *Lord's ſupper*, as if theſe rites themſelves, when duly adminiſtered (to which their being adminiſtered by a perſon regularly ordained for the purpoſe was conſidered as neceſſary) imparted ſome *ſpiritual grace*. Thus baptiſm was ſuppoſed to waſh away all paſt ſins; and the act of communion to impart ſome other ſecret virtue, by which a title to the bleſſings of the goſpel was ſecured to the communicant. On this account, many perſons who profeſſed themſelves to be chriſtians, deferred baptiſm till late in life, or even to the hour of death, that they might leave the world with the greater certainty of all their ſins being forgiven, and before any new guilt could be contracted.

Thoſe of the early Fathers who aſcribed the leaſt to the rite of baptiſm, ſuppoſed that by it was

was done away whatever inconvenience mankind had been ſubjected to in conſequence of the fall of Adam; ſo that they made a great difference between the caſe of thoſe children who died baptized, and thoſe who died unbaptized; and the virtue that was aſcribed to the Lord's ſupper was the foundation of all the ſuperſtitions reſpecting that ordinance, of which an account has already been given.

When moral virtue had been once aſcribed to any corporeal action, inſtituted by divine appointment, chriſtians were led by degrees to imagine that a ſimilar virtue might be communicated by other actions, or ſigns, not of divine appointment, but bearing ſome relation to religion. This ſuperſtitious uſe was firſt made of the *ſign of the croſs*, which, as has been obſerved, was uſed originally with great innocence, perhaps as a private mark of diſtinction between the chriſtians and heathens, in the time of perſecution; or, in peaceable times, to ſhew the heathens that they were not aſhamed of that very circumſtance with which they reproached them the moſt, viz. the crucifixion of their maſter.

We firſt hear of this ceremony among the Montaniſts; and Tertullian, who became a Montaniſt, makes great boaſt of it. In the beginning of any buſineſs, ſays he, going out, coming in, dreſſing, waſhing, eating, lighting candles, going to

to bed, ſitting down, or whatever we do, we ſign our forehead with the ſign of the croſs*.

In the third century we find the ſign of the croſs in ſtill more general uſe, it being thought to be a defence againſt enchantments and evil ſpirits; and no chriſtian undertook any thing of moment without it. The uſe of this ſign was brought more into faſhion by the emperor Conſtantine, who, it is ſaid, made uſe of it as his imperial banner or ſtandard. And ſo high did this ſign of the croſs riſe in eſtimation, in later ages, that the papiſts maintain that the croſs, and even the ſign of the croſs, is to be adored with the worſhip which they call *Latria*, or that of the higheſt kind†.

After the ſign of the croſs, a ſanctifying virtue was aſcribed to *holy water*, or ſalt and water, ſuch as the heathens had uſed in their purifications, conſecrated by a biſhop. An extraordinary power was alſo aſcribed to lights burning in the day-time, to the uſe of incenſe, to the relics of the ſaints, and to their images; and as the ſuperſtitious veneration for the real euchariſt, produced a *mock* one, ſo it probably occaſioned another ſuperſtition, ſomething ſimilar to it, viz. the making of little waxen images of a lamb, which were

* De Corona, cap. iv. Opera, p. 102.
† Moſheim, vol. i. p. 202. 205. 238.

either

either invented or much improved by pope Urban VI. The pope alone has the power of conſecrating them, and that in the firſt year only of his popedom, and in every ſeventh year afterwards. In the ſervice on this occaſion, which may be ſeen in the *Hiſtory of Popery*, vol. iii. p. 531, theſe *Agnus Dei's*, as they are called, are ſaid to be *bleſſed* and *ſanctified*, ſo as "by honouring and "worſhipping them, we thy ſervants may have "our crimes waſhed off, the ſpots of our ſins "wiped away, pardons may be procured, graces "beſtowed, that at the laſt, with thy ſaints and "elect, we may merit to receive eternal life."

Still greater virtue was aſcribed to pilgrimages to viſit particular churches and places, which were reputed holy, on account of their having been the reſort of holy perſons, or the theatre of holy actions, &c. and a ſimilar virtue has been aſcribed to the attendance on particular ceremonies. In 1071, the pope promiſed indulgence for all ſin confeſſed by thoſe who ſhould aſſiſt at the dedication of a church at mount Caſſin, or who ſhould come to the new church during the octave; which, Fleury ſays, brought an aſtoniſhing concourſe of people, ſo that not only the monaſtery, and the town, but even the neighbouring country was filled with them. Sixtus IV. in 1476, granted indulgences, by an expreſs and particular act, to thoſe who ſhould devoutly celebrate an annual feſtival in honour of the immaculate conception

ception of the virgin Mary*. This ſuperſtitious uſe of pilgrimages was likewiſe the foundation of all the *Jubilees* which have been celebrated at Rome, of which an account has been given among the *feſtivals* that have been introduced into the chriſtian church.

All the popiſh ſacraments are likewiſe certain ceremonies, to the uſe of which the members of the catholic church aſcribe a ſupernatural and ſanctifying effect upon the mind; and they ſuppoſe them to have that weight and influence with the divine being, which nothing but real virtue, or good diſpoſitions of mind, can ever have.

If things quite foreign to virtue have nevertheleſs been put in the place of it, we ſhall not wonder that actions of real value in themſelves, and which, when proceeding from a right diſpoſition of mind, are real virtues, ſhould have been much magnified, and that the actions themſelves ſhould have been imagined to be meritorious, even independently of the proper ſtate of mind.

Thus, ſince giving to the needy, or being liberal for any uſeful purpoſe, is generally a teſt of virtue, it is no wonder that, in all ages, it has, by many perſons, been ſubſtituted in the place of it. And notwithſtanding the ſtrong cautions on this

* Moſheim, vol. iii. p. 271.

head

head in the New Teſtament, eſpecially the apoſtle Paul's ſaying that he might *give all his goods to feed the poor*, and yet be deſtitute of *charity*, or brotherly love, this ſpurious kind of virtue was never made more account of, than in the corrupt ages of the chriſtian church; when an open traffic, as it were, was kept up between earth and heaven; there being nothing of a ſpiritual nature that they did not imagine might be bought with money.

In the eighth century, Moſheim ſays*, a notion prevailed, that future puniſhment might be prevent by donations to religious uſes; and therefore few wills were made in which ſomething was not bequeathed to the church. For, of all pious uſes, in the diſpoſal of wealth, the *church* (which as it was then always underſtood, meant the *clergy* or the *monks*) was univerſally deemed a better object than the poor. Hence that amazing accumulation of wealth, which nearly threatened the utter extinction of all merely civil property.

Obvious as we now think the nature of virtue to be, and fully ſatisfied as we are, that the nature and excellency of it conſiſts in its tendency to make men happy, in the poſſeſſion of their own minds, and in all their relations; ſo groſsly has its nature been miſtaken, that not only have things intirely foreign to it been ſubſtituted in its place,

* Vol. ii. p. 60.

as thoſe above-mentioned, but even things that have no other effect than to give pain, and make men miſerable. This moſt abſurd and ſpurious kind of virtue began very early in the chriſtian church; and in proceſs of time the auſterities to which chriſtians voluntarily ſubjected themſelves, in order to make their peace with God and ſecure their future happineſs, almoſt exceed belief.

It has been obſerved before, that the firſt corruptions of chriſtianity were derived from heatheniſm, and eſpecially from the principles of the Oriental philoſophy; and there are ſimilar auſterities at this very day among the Hindoos. Their notion that the ſoul is a diſtinct ſubſtance from the body, and that the latter is only a priſon and clog to the former, naturally leads them to extenuate and mortify the body, in order to exalt and purify the ſoul. Hence came the idea of the great uſe and value of faſting, of abſtinence from marriage, and of voluntary pain and torture; till at length it became a maxim, that the man who could contrive to make himſelf the moſt miſerable here, ſecures to himſelf the greateſt ſhare of happineſs hereafter. As the principle which led to all this ſyſtem came from the Eaſt, we are not ſurprized to find the firſt traces of it in thoſe ſects of chriſtian heretics who borrowed their leading ſentiments more immediately from the principles of the Oriental philoſophy.

The

The Gnoſtics, conſidering matter and mate-al bodies as the ſource of all evil, were no ends to marriage, becauſe it was a means of ultiplying corporeal beings; and upon the ſame inciple they alſo objected to the doctrine of the ſurrection of the body, and its future re-union ith the immortal ſpirit *. Marcion alſo, adopt-g the principles of the Oriental philoſophy, ohibited marriage, the uſe of wine, and fleſh eats, and all external comforts of life, in order mortify the body, and call off the mind from e allurements of ſenſe. Of the ſame nature as the doctrine of Bardeſanes, Tatian, and any others †.

Some of the heathen philoſophers in the eſtern world had been uſed, from the ſame prin-ple, to exerciſe ſtrange ſeverities upon them-lves and their diſciples, from the days of Py-agoras, to thoſe of Lucian, who introduces the iloſopher Nigrinus as condemning ſuch prac-es, and obſerving that they had occaſioned the ath of ſeveral perſons ‡. The Greek philoſo-ers had alſo a particular dreſs, and many of m affected to appear rough, mean, and dirty. e chriſtian monks imitated theſe old philoſo-ers in their garb and appearance, and they re often cenſured for the ſame pride and con-tious ſpirit §.

* Moſheim, vol. i. p. 109. † Ib. p. 178. 180.
‡ Jortin's Remarks, vol. iii. p. 23. § Ib. p. 29.

To vindicate the doctrine of corporeal auſterity, it was pretended, in the ſecond century, that Chriſt eſtabliſhed a double rule of chriſtianity and virtue, the one more ſublime than the other for thoſe who wiſhed to attain to greater perfection. Theſe thought that it was incumbent on them to extenuate and humble the body, by faſting, watching, and labour, and to refrain from wine, fleſh meat, matrimony, and commerce *.

Great ſtreſs was alſo laid, both by the eaſtern and weſtern philoſophers, on *contemplation*, to which *ſolitude* was favourable. By thus excluding themſelves from the world, and mediating intenſely on ſublime ſubjects, they thought they could raiſe the ſoul above all external objects, and advance its preparation for a better and more ſpiritual ſtate hereafter. Many chriſtians, therefore, and eſpecially thoſe who had been addicted to the Platonic philoſophy, before their converſion, were exceedingly fond of theſe exerciſes. And this notion, though more liberal than the former, which led them to torment and mortify the body, naturally led them to be very inattentive to it, ſeeking the cultivation of the *mind*, and the knowledge of truth, in a fancied abſtraction from all ſenſible objects, In this ſtate of contemplation, joined to ſolitude and abſtinence, it is no wonder that they were open

* Moſheim, vol. i. p. 157.

to

to many illuſions; fancying themſelves to be inſpired in the ſame manner as the heathen prophets and propheteſſes had fancied themſelves to be, and as madmen are ſtill generally imagined to be in the Eaſt. Theſe pretenſions to inſpiration were moſt common among the Montaniſts, who were alſo moſt remarkable for their auſterities.

In the third century, in which the doctrine of Plato prevailed much, we find that marriage, though permitted to all prieſts, as well as other perſons, was thought to be unfit for thoſe who aſpired after great degrees of ſanctity and purity; it being ſuppoſed to ſubject them to the power of evil dæmons, and on this account many people wiſhed to have their clergy unmarried*. Origen, who was much addicted to Platoniſm, gave into the myſtic theology, and recommended the peculiar practices of the heathen myſtics, founded on the notion that ſilence, tranquility, and ſolitude, accompanied with acts of mortification, which exhauſt the body, were the means of exalting the ſoul.

The perverſions of the ſenſe of ſcripture by which theſe unnatural practices were ſupported are aſtoniſhing. Jerom, writing againſt marriage, calls thoſe who are in that ſtate *veſſels of*

* Moſheim, vol. i. p. 218.

diſhonour; and to them he applies the ſaying of Paul, *They that are in the fleſh cannot pleaſe God.*

The laws alſo of chriſtian emperors ſoon began to favour theſe maxims. Conſtantine revoked all the laws that made celibacy infamous among the the antient Romans, and made it to be conſidered as honourable*.

I muſt now proceed to mention various other auſterities, which poor deluded mortals, whom I am aſhamed to call chriſtians, inflicted upon themſelves, vainly imagining to merit heaven by them, for themſelves and others. In this I ſhall, in general, obſerve the order of time in which I find an account of them in eccleſiaſtical hiſtory; obſerving that the facts I mention are but a ſmall ſpecimen of the kind, but they may ſerve to give us an idea of the general ſentiments and ſpirit that prevailed in the dark ages of the church.

Some of the Myſtics of the fifth century not only lived among the wild beaſts, but alſo after their manner. They ran naked through the deſart with a furious aſpect. They fed on graſs and wild herbs, avoided the ſight and converſation of men, remained motionleſs in certain places for ſeveral years, expoſed to the rigour and inclemency of the ſeaſons; and towards the conclu-

* Sueur, A. D. 320.

ſion

ſion of their lives, ſhut themſelves up in narrow and miſerable huts. All this was conſidered as true piety, the only method of rendering the Deity propitious to them; and by this means they attracted the higheſt veneration of the deluded multitude. One Simeon, a Syrian, in order perhaps to clime as near to heaven as he could, paſſed thirty-ſeven years of his wretched life upon five pillars, of ſix, twelve, thirty-two, thirty-ſix, and laſtly forty cubits high. Others followed his example, being called *Stilites* by the Greeks, and *Sancticolumnares*, or *Pillar Saints*, by the Latins; and, of all the inſtance of ſuperſtitious frenzy, none were held in higher veneration than this, and the practice continued in the Eaſt till the twelfth century*.

Among the popiſh pilgrims there is a ſpecies called *Palmers*, from a bough of palm which they carry with them. Theſe have no home, or place of reſidence, but travel and beg their bread till they obtain what they call the *palm*, or a complete victory over their ſins by death†.

Many of the rules to which the monaſtic orders are ſubject are extremely rigorous. Stephen a nobleman of Auvergne, who inſtituted the order of *Grand-montain*, with the permiſſion of Gregory VII. forbad his monks the uſe of fleſh

* Moſheim, vol. i. p. 391. † Hiſtory of Popery, vol. i. p. 212.

meat even in ſickneſs, and impoſed upon them the obſervance of a ſolemn and uninterrupted ſilence *.

The hermits of Luceola in Umbria were not allowed any thing of fat in the preparation of their vegetables. They ate only raw herbs, except on Sundays and Thurſdays. On other days they eat nothing but bread and water, and were continually employed in prayer or labour. They kept a ſtrict ſilence all the week, and on Sundays only ſpake to one another between veſpers and complines; and in their cells they had no covering for their feet or legs.

The perſons the moſt diſtinguiſhed in eccleſiaſtical hiſtory for their bodily auſterities and religious exerciſes, were Dominic, who was one of theſe hermits, and Peter Damiani who was his ſpiritual guide, both of whom were mentioned above. This Dominic for many years had next to his ſkin an iron coat of mail, which he never put off but for the ſake of flagellation. He ſeldom paſſed a day without chanting two pſalters, at the ſame time whipping himſelf with both his hands; and yet this was his time of greateſt relaxation. For in Lent, and while he was performing penance for other perſons, he would repeat at leaſt three pſalters a day, whip-

* Moſheim, vol. ii. p. 308.

ping

ping himſelf at the ſame time. He would often repeat two pſalters without any interval between them, without even ſitting down, or ceaſing for one moment to whip himſelf.

Peter Damiani aſking him one day if he could kneel with his coat of mail; he ſaid, When I am well I make a hundred genuflections every fifteenth pſalm, which is a thouſand in the whole pſalter; and one time he told his maſter that he had gone through the pſalter eight times in one day and night; and at another time, trying his utmoſt, he repeated it twelve times, and as far as the pſalm which begins with *Beati Quorum* of the thirteenth. And in repeating the pſalter he did not ſtop at the hundred and fifty pſalms, but added to them the canticles, the hymns, the creed of St. Athanaſius, and the litanies, which are to be found at the end of the old pſalters. His faſting and his coat of mail made his ſkin as black as a negroe, and beſides this he wore four iron rings, two on his thighs, and two on his legs, to which he afterwards added four others; and beſides this iron ſhirt he had another under him to ſleep upon. Notwithſtanding theſe ſeverities, he died very old on the fourteenth of October, 1062, which day is dedicated to his honour in the calendar of the church of Rome*. The auſterities of Peter

* Fleury, vol. xiii. p. 99.

Damiani

Damiani were ſimilar to theſe, and an account of them may be ſeen in the ſame hiſtorian *.

In the thirteenth century there aroſe in Italy, a ſect that was called the *Flagellants*, or whippers, and it was propagated from thence over all the countries of Europe. They ran about in promiſcuous multitudes, of both ſexes, of all ranks and ages, both in public places, and in deſarts, with whips in their hands, laſhing their naked bodies with the greateſt ſeverity, ſhrieking dreadfully, and looking up to heaven with an air of horror and diſtraction; and this they did to obtain the divine mercy for themſelves and others. For they maintained that this whipping was of equal virtue with baptiſm, and the other ſacraments, and that the forgiveneſs of all ſin was to be obtained by it from God, even without the merits of Jeſus Chriſt. Theſe people attracted the eſteem and veneration not only of the populace, but of their rulers alſo; but being afterwards joined by a turbulent and furious rabble, they fell into diſcredit †.

The Janſeniſts carried their auſterities ſo far, that they called thoſe perſons who put an end to their own lives by their exceſſive abſtinence or labour, the ſacred *victims of repentance*, and ſaid that they had been *conſumed by the fire of divine*

* Fleury, p. 205, &c. † Moſheim, vol. iii. p. 95, 206.

love.

love. By theſe ſufferings they thought to appeaſe the anger of the Divine Being, and to bring down bleſſings upon themſelves, their friends, and the church. The famous Abbe de Paris put himſelf to a moſt painful death, depriving himſelf of almoſt all the bleſſings of life, in order to ſatisfy, as he thought, the juſtice of an incenſed God *.

So famous was the devout nunnery of Port Royal in the fields, that multitudes of perſons crowded to live in its neighbourhood, and to imitate the manners of thoſe nuns; and this in ſo late a period as the ſeventeenth century. The end that they had in view was, by ſilence, hunger, thirſt, prayer, bodily labour, watching, and other voluntary acts of ſelf-denial, to efface the guilt of their ſins, and to remove the pollution of their ſouls, whether derived from natural corruption, or evil habits. Many perſons, illuſtrious by their birth and fortunes, choſe this mode of life †.

Dr. Middleton mentions a practice ſtill kept up at Rome, which is equally ſhocking on account of its cruelty and abſurdity. "In one of their "proceſſions, in the time of Lent, I ſaw," ſays he, "that ridiculous penance of the Flagellants, or "ſelf-whippers, who march with whips in their "hands, and laſh themſelves as they go along "upon the bare back, till it is all covered with

* Moſheim, vol. iv. p. 382. † Ib. p. 385.

"blood,

" blood, in the ſame manner as the fanatical " prieſts of Bellona, or the Syrian goddeſs, as " well as the votaries of Iſis, uſed to ſlaſh and " cut themſelves of old; a mad piece of diſci- " pline, which we find frequently mentioned, " and as often ridiculed, by the ancient writers."

" But," ſays he, " they have another exer- " ciſe of the ſame kind, and in the ſame ſeaſon " of Lent, which, under the notion of penance, is " ſtill a more abſurd mockery of all religion. For " on a certain day, appointed annually for this diſ- " cipline, men of all conditions aſſemble towards " the evening in one of the churches, where whips, " or laſhes made of cords, are provided, and diſ- " tributed to every perſon preſent; and after they " are all ſerved, and a ſhort office of devotion " performed, the candles being put out, on the " ringing of a little bell, the whole company be- " gin to ſtrip, and whip themſelves near an hour, " during which time the church is, as it were, a " hell, nothing being heard but the noiſe of laſhes " and chains, mixed with the groans of theſe ſelf- " tormentors. The candles being lighted at the " tinkling of a ſecond bell, they all appear in " their proper dreſs *."

Beſides the idea of tormenting the body for the good of the ſoul, the Platoniſts eſpecially, as I have obſerved above, had a notion of exalting the

* Letters from Rome, p. 190, &c.

ſoul

ſoul by *contemplation*; fancying that the mind contained within itſelf the elements of all knowledge, and that they were beſt drawn forth by looking within; and alſo that communion with God was beſt kept up by an abſtraction of the mind from all corporeal things. Theſe notions chiefly gave riſe to what is generally called *myſticiſm*, with which the minds of the early monks were much tinctured, and which, more or leſs, affected moſt of thoſe who had recourſe to bodily auſterities. But others without taking any particular pains to torment the body, gave themſelves almoſt wholly to contemplation.

This turn of mind, giving great ſcope for the flights of fancy, produced very different effects on different perſons; and in ſome it operated as an antidote to the vulgar ſuperſtition of the church of Rome, in which hardly any thing was attended to for many ages beſides mere *bodily exerciſes*. For though the ideas of the Myſtics were very confuſed, they had a notion of the neceſſity of aiming at ſomething of *inward purity*, diſtinct from all ritual obſervances. Nay theſe notions led ſome of them (ſeeing the abuſe that had been made of poſitive rites) to renounce them all together, even thoſe of divine appointment, as baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper.

Moſheim ſays, that if any ſpark of real piety ſubſiſted during the reign of papal ſuperſtition, it

was

was among the Myſtics, who, renouncing the learning of the ſchools, and the ceremonies of external worſhip, exhorted their followers to aim at nothing but internal ſanctity of heart, and communion with God, the center and ſource of holineſs and perfection. Hence the Myſtics were loved and reſpected by many perſons who had a ſerious ſenſe of religion, but he adds, they joined much ſuperſtition with their reveries *.

On ſome perſons theſe notions had a very unfavourable effect. In the thirteenth century there was formed a ſociety called *the brethren and ſiſters of the free ſpirit*, called by the Germans *Beghards* or *Begats*, a name which had been uſually given to thoſe who made a profeſſion of extraordinary piety. In France they were *Beghines*. They went from place to place, begging their bread, and neglecting all kinds of labour, as obſtacles to divine contemplation. They maintained that every man, by the power of meditation, and calling off his mind from ſenſible objects, might be united to the Deity in an ineffable manner, ſo as to become part of the godhead, in the ſame ſenſe in which Chriſt was, and thereby became free from all obligation to laws human or divine. In conſequence of this, they treated all the ordinances of the goſpel with contempt, as of no uſe to *perfect men*. Some of theſe poor wretches

* Moſheim, vol. iii. p. 502.

were

were burnt in the inquiſition, and endured various other perſecutions*.

We even find ſome who carried their notion of the abſtraction of the mind from the body to ſuch a degree, that they fancied that when the mind had attained to a certain pitch of perfection by means of contemplation, no act in which the body only was concerned could affect it; ſo that they might indulge themſelves in any ſenſual pleaſure without contracting the leaſt defilement of ſoul. The conſequences of this opinion could not but be exceedingly pernicious.

Some of the ſpiritual brethren in Flanders (and who, as Moſheim ſays, were patronized by ſeveral of the reformed churches) maintained that the Deity was the ſole operating cauſe in the mind of man, and the immediate author of all human actions; and conſequently that the diſtinction of good and evil was groundleſs, that religion conſiſted in the union of the ſoul with God, attained by contemplation and elevation of mind, and that when this was gained, all indulgence of the appetites and paſſions was perfectly innocent†. Margaret Poretta, who made a ſhining figure amongſt the Beghards, and who was burnt at Paris in 1310, wrote an elaborate treatiſe, to prove that the ſoul, when abſorbed in

* Moſheim, vol. iii. p. 224. † Ib. vol. iv. p. 103.

the

the love of God, is free from reſtraint of every law, and may freely gratify all its natural appetites without contracting any guilt*.

Theſe licentious maxims were aſcribed by the Jeſuits, but probably without reaſon, to the Quietiſts in general, a ſect which aroſe in 1686, and gave great diſturbance to the court of Rome. The inquiſition put many of theſe ſectaries in priſon, and among others Molinos who was one of the chief of them, and they put him to the torture in order to diſcover his accomplices. Letters were alſo written to all the biſhops of Italy to exhort them not to ſuffer Quietiſm to take root in their dioceſes. But notwithſtanding this, the ſect made ſuch progreſs in a ſhort time, by the external marks of mortification, devotion, contemplation, abſtraction of mind, and a pretended intimate union with God, that many perſons of condition adopted their ſentiments; and even ſome cardinals were infected by them. On this the popes and the Jeſuits exerted themſelves ſo much, that in a general congregation of the inquiſition, Molinos was condemned to perpetual impriſonment, and to renounce his opinions†.

This ſect made great progreſs in Italy in 1696, and increaſed notwithſtanding all the oppoſition

* Moſheim, vol. iii. p. 202.

† Hiſtoire des Papes, vol. v. p. 381,

which

which was made to it. The pious Fenelon, archbiſhop of Cambray, gave into this viſionary ſyſtem, and his humility and excellent diſpoſition appeared, together with his weakneſs of mind, and bigoted attachment to the church of Rome, in his readineſs to recant, and condemn his own writings when they were cenſured by the pope.

Madame Bourignon was a woman who diſtinguiſhed herſelf much by an attachment to the ſame ſyſtem. She maintained that the chriſtian religion conſiſted neither in knowledge nor in practice, but in a certain internal feeling, or divine impulſe, that ariſes immediately from communion with God*.

Something ſimilar to the principles of the Quietiſts are thoſe of the Quakers in England; who, though they are far from ſubſtituting any thing in the place of virtue, yet expect ſupernatural illumination and aſſiſtance, to enlighten the mind, and to form it to virtue. They maintain that there is concealed in the minds of all men, a certain portion of the ſame light or wiſdom that exiſts in the ſupreme being, which is drawn forth by ſelf converſe and contemplation. This divine light they uſually called the *internal word*, or *Chriſt within*. But many of the modern Quakers make this hidden principle to be nothing more than that of natural conſcience, or reaſon; though in

* Moſheim, vol. v. p. 65.

this they certainly depart from the genuine principles of their anceſtors, on which their ſect was founded. The primitive Quakers (even as the more rigid among them at preſent do) certainly pretended to ſpeak and act by the ſame kind of inſpiration by which the apoſtles themſelves acted, and therefore they made no greater account of the apoſtolical writings or of the ſcriptures in general, than of their own ſuggeſtions.

As the laſt effort of human ingenuity and depravity, I ſhall give a ſhort account of the ſophiſtical caſuiſtry of the Jeſuits; a religious order which aroſe after the reformation, and which was for ſome time eſteemed to be the great bulwark

preſent to his mind at the time of action. They alſo maintained that an opinion or precept may be followed with a good conſcience, if it had been taught by any one doctor of conſiderable reputation, even though it be contrary to the judgment of him that follows it, and even of him that recommends it. This they called the doctrine of *probability*.

They alſo held what they called the doctrine of *philoſophical ſin*, according to which an action that is repugnant to the dictates of reaſon might not be offenſive to the Deity. They held that wicked actions might be innocently performed, if perſons could in their own mind, connect a good end with them, or as they expreſſed it *direct their intentions right*. Thus a man who kills his neighbour in a duel would be acquitted by them, if, at any time, he had turned his thoughts from the principle of revenge, to that of honour, &c. Agreeably to this, they even held that an oath might be taken with mental additions and reſervations. This, however does not agree with their being charged with paying no attention to the motives with which actions are performed; but it agrees very well with their maintaining that the ſacraments produced their effect by their own virtue, and immediate operation, or what they called *opus operatum*. But it cannot be ſuppoſed that all theſe maxims were held with perfect uniformity by them all *.

* Moſheim, vol. iii. p. 468; vol. iv. p. 355, &c.

The folly and wickedneſs of theſe maxims were admirably expoſed by the famous Paſchal, in his *Provincial Letters*, which, for their excellent compoſition, and good ſenſe, were read with the utmoſt avidity, and the higheſt approbation through all Europe; in conſequence of which their doctines were univerſally exploded, and held in the greateſt abhorrence by all men. Indeed the extreme odiouſneſs of them contributed not a little to the downfall of the order.

It is a dangerous maxim, not of the Jeſuits only, but of the divines of the church of Rome in general, to diſtinguiſh between *contrition* and *attrition*; allowing great merit even to the latter, though it conſiſts of any kind of ſorrow on the account of ſin, even for the loſs or diſgrace that it brings upon a man, without any reſolution to ſin no more. Such a ſorrow as this, they ſay, makes the ſacrament of *penance* effectual. This was ſettled at the council of Trent, though the proteſtants thought that it ſtruck at the root of all religion and virtue *.

But the moſt flagrant inſtance of immorality with which the church of Rome is charged, is the holding that no faith is to be kept with heretics; and upon this principle the council of Conſtance acted, when the ſafe conduct which the emperor Sigiſmond had given to John Huſs the Bohemian reformer, was declared to be invalid, as given to

* Burnet on the Articles, p. 348.

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an heretic, on which he was arreſted and condemned to the flames. From this time it was the opinion of many in the church of Rome, that no promiſe made to an heretic is binding.

Pope Eugenius authorized Uladiſlaus king of Hungary, to break a ſolemn treaty with Amurath emperor of the Turks, which ended as it might be wiſhed that ſuch horrible prevarication might always end. The Turk carried a copy of the treaty into the field of battle, and diſplaying it in the beginning of the engagement, pronounced aloud, "Behold, O Jeſus, theſe are the covenants "which thy chriſtians ſwearing by thy name, made "with me. Now therefore, if thou art a God, "revenge theſe injuries to me, and to thyſelf, "upon their perfidious heads." The conſequence was, that the Turks being exceedingly exaſperated, and the chriſtians diſpirited, the latter were put to flight; and both the king and the cardinal who had urged him to break the peace, and who was along with him, were killed upon the ſpot.

I have not found any public or general declaration on the ſubject of keeping no faith with heretics, but that of Clement IX. who, in his *Acts*, printed at Rome in 1724, expreſsly declares that all promiſes or ſtipulations made in favour of proteſtants, are entirely null and void, when-

ever they are prejudicial to the catholic faith, the ſalvation of ſouls, or to any rights of the church; even though ſuch engagements have been often ratified, and confirmed by oath.

I have no doubt, however, but that the catholics of this day would reject this doctrine with as much abhorrence as proteſtants themſelves; and indeed, if it had not been a general opinion with them, that oaths and ſubſcriptions preſcribed by proteſtants were binding, no reaſon can be given why they ſhould not have taken the oaths which have been employed in this country to prevent them from enjoying the advantages of other ſubjects; and yet in all the time ſince the government of this country has been proteſtant, no ſuch inſtance has been produced. The catholics have univerſally ſubmitted to their excluſion from all places of honour and profit, the payment of double taxes, &c. &c. without ever endeavouring to relieve themſelves by a declaration or oath, which the proteſtants ſay they would not conſider as binding, and for the violation of which they might, it is ſaid, be at leaſt ſure of obtaining an abſolution at Rome. But even there, it is very probable, that no ſuch abſolution would now be given.

It is to be hoped, that in many other reſpects catholics do not lay the ſtreſs they have been formerly taught to do on things foreign to real virtue,

tue, that is, to good diſpoſitions of mind, and a good conduct in life; as it is to be lamented, that many proteſtants are far from being free from all ſuperſtition in theſe reſpects. But now that the minds of men ſeem to be ſo well opened to the admiſſion of religious truth in general, errors ſo fundamental as theſe which relate to *morality*, will hardly remain long without redreſs. It will be happy if the reformation of chriſtians in doctrine and diſcipline be followed by a ſuitable reformation in practice.

THE

HISTORY

OF THE

Corruptions of Chriſtianity.

PART X.

The Hiſtory of Miniſters in the Chriſtian Church, and eſpecially of BISHOPS.

THE INTRODUCTION.

THE chriſtian church was ſerved originally (excluſive of the apoſtles and other temporary officers) by *Elders* and *Deacons* only; the former being appointed for ſpiritual matters, and the latter for civil affairs. They were all choſen by the people, and were ordained to their office by prayer, which, when it was made on the behalf of any particular perſon, was in early times always accompanied with the impoſition of hands. For the ſake of order in conducting any buſineſs that concerned the whole ſociety, one of the elders

was

was made *preſident* or *moderator* in their aſſemblies, but without any more power than that of having a ſingle vote with the reſt of his brethren. From this ſimple conſtitution, it is certainly aſtoniſhing to conſider how theſe *ſervants of the church*, came in time to be the *lords of it*, and of the world; and it is curious to obſerve the various ſteps by which this change was made.

SECTION I.

The Hiſtory of Chriſtian Miniſters till the Fall of the Weſtern Empire.

THE firſt change in the conſtitution of the primitive churches, was making the moſt diſtinguiſhed of the elders to be *conſtant preſident*, or moderator, in their aſſemblies, and appropriating to him the title of (επισκοπος) or *biſhop*, which had before been common to all the preſbyters or elders, but without giving him any peculiar power or authority.

Since the firſt chriſtian converts were almoſt wholly from the common ranks of life, there could be no great difference in their qualifications for

for any office, except what natural good ſenſe, or age and experience, might give to ſome more than to others. In this ſtate of things, it is evident that none of them could have been educated with a view to any employment of this kind. But it was ſoon found expedient, and eſpecially on account of the controverſies which they had with Jews and heathens, as well as among themſelves, that their public inſtructors, and eſpecially theſe biſhops, ſhould be men of ſome learning; and accordingly ſchools were erected, in very early times, in which young men were inſtructed in ſuch branches of knowledge as were found to be moſt uſeful to them in the diſcharge of their miniſterial duties. Antient writers ſay, that the apoſtle John eſtabliſhed a ſchool, or academy of this kind, at Epheſus. However, that which was afterwards eſtabliſhed at Alexandria in Egypt, called the *catechetic ſchool*, formed upon the plan of thoſe of the Greek philoſophers, was particularly famous.

A better education, and ſuperior fitneſs for the more conſpicuous duties of chriſtian ſocieties, in expounding the ſcriptures, giving various inſtruction, public prayer, &c. would naturally create a greater difference than had been known before between chriſtian miniſters and the people, and for the ſame reaſon between the biſhops and the elders; and power and influence never fail to accompany

accompany ſuperior qualifications. But it was ſeveral centuries before the common people ceaſed to have votes in every thing that related to the whole ſociety.

The firſt great change in the conſtitution of the chriſtian church, was the exaltation of the preſbyters into the rank of biſhops in churches; which was, in fact, an annihilation of that important order of men, and threw the government of a church into the hands of one perſon.

The manner in which this change took place was gradual and eaſy. Whenever the number of converts in any place became too great for them to aſſemble with convenience in one building, they erected other places of public worſhip; but conſidering theſe not as new and diſtinct churches, but as branches of the old one, in order to preſerve the connection with the mother church they did not ordain a new biſhop, but had all the miniſterial duty done either by ſome of the former preſbyters, or by new ones ordained for that purpoſe.

In this train things went on till at length the mother church, or ſome of the dependent churches, ſending out more colonies, and to greater diſtances, the biſhop of the mother church (being the only perſon in the diſtrict who bore that name) came

came to be a *dioceſan biſhop*, whoſe elders and deacons preſided in all the ſeparate and dependent churches. Very few elders alſo remained in the mother church, becauſe none were now ordained to that office, except ſuch as lived by the miniſtry. The church of Rome muſt have been in this ſtate at the beginning of the fourth century, when Marullus divided it (that is, all the chriſtians in Rome) into twenty-five pariſhes, appointing one prieſt for each of them, to inſtruct the people, and to adminiſter the ſacraments. It was the cuſtom for the biſhop to ſend a part of the conſecrated bread, after the adminiſtration of the euchariſt, to each of theſe dependent churches*.

Sometimes, however, when new churches were erected in places at a diſtance from any capital town, they were governed by new-made biſhops, preſbyters, and deacons, like the original churches. Beauſobre ſays †, that he believes one cannot find an inſtance ſo early as the middle of the third century of a church governed by a ſingle preſbyter. Theſe country biſhops, called *choroepiſcopi*, made but a poor figure in compariſon with the opulence and ſplendor of the city biſhops. But before they were generally aboliſhed, which was in the fourth century, their rank and power were very much diminiſhed. In a council held

* Sueur, A. D. 307. 313.

† Hiſt. of Manicheiſme, vol. i. p. 113.

at

at Antioch, in 341, theſe country biſhops were forbidden to ordain prieſts or deacons, and had only the power of appointing perſons to inferior offices in the church. By degrees the country biſhops were entirely aboliſhed (though not in all places till ſo late as the tenth century) when *rural deans* and *arch prieſts* were inſtituted in their place *. After this the ſyſtem of dioceſan epiſcopacy was fully eſtabliſhed. There were biſhops in capital towns only, and all the churches within their diſtricts were governed by preſbyters, or deacons under them.

As the diſtinction between biſhops and preſbyters has been the ſubject of much controverſy between the advocates for the church of England and the Diſſenters, I ſhall produce a few more authorities to prove that originally they were the ſame order of men.

At firſt the oldeſt of the preſbyters ſucceeded of courſe to the place of preſident among them. But this ceaſed to be the caſe even in the age of the apoſtles, when the preſident was choſen by the plurality of votes, and then the title of *biſhop*, which before had been common to all the preſbyters, was appropriated to him. This, ſays Sueur, was in the time of Hyginus †.

* Sueur, A. D. 341. 439. † A. D. 142.

In

In the age of Cyprian, when diſtinctions were made among the biſhops themſelves, and when he himſelf was the metropolitan of the whole province, and one who was a ſtrenuous advocate for the power and dignity of the clergy, it appears that even this metropolitan biſhop had no more authority than to aſſemble the clergy of his province, to preſide in their councils, and to admoniſh his brethren. There was no act of a ſpiritual nature that was peculiar to himſelf; and in his abſence from the church, during his perſecution, every part of his office was diſcharged by his preſbyters.

Chryſoſtom ſays*, that when the apoſtle Paul gave orders to Titus to ordain elders in every city, he meant biſhops. For, ſays he, he would not have the whole iſland of Crete committed to one man, but that every perſon ſhould have and mind his own proper cure; for ſo the labour would be eaſier to him, and the people to be governed would have more care taken of them. For their teachers would not run about to govern many churches, but would attend to the ruling of one only, and ſo keep it in good order. Theophylact alſo interprets the paſſage in the ſame manner, ſaying that each city was to have its own paſtor, and that by *preſbyters* in this place the

* In Titum, l. v. Opera, vol. x. p. 1700.

apoſtle

apoſtle meant *biſhops**. Oecumenius and Theodorit likewiſe ſay that the apoſtle did not commit the charge of that large iſland to one man†, and yet it is not ſo large as ſome of our dioceſes.

Jerom, on the epiſtle to Titus, ſays, that among the antients, prieſts and biſhops were the ſame; but that by degrees the care of a church was given to one perſon, in order to prevent diſſention. This he proves at large from many paſſages in the new Teſtament. Let the biſhops know, ſays he, that they are above the prieſts more by cuſtom than by the appointment of Chriſt‡. The ſame learned Father alſo ſays that, at the beginning, churches were governed by the common council of preſbyters, like an ariſtocracy; but afterwards the ſuperintendency was given to one of the preſbyters, who was then called the biſhop, and who governed the church, but ſtill with the council of the preſbyters §.

At firſt biſhops were appointed by the whole congregation, conſiſting of *clergy* and *laity*, as they were afterwards called, nor did any church apply to the neighbouring biſhops to aſſiſt at the ordination. Irenæus was ordained by prieſts only, and ſuch was the general cuſtom of the church of Alexandria till the beginning of the fourth century.

* Pierce's Vindication, p. 375. † Ib. p. 343
‡ Opera, vol. vi. p. 198. § Anecdotes, p. 24. 54.

century *. Cyprian alſo ſays that it belonged to the people chiefly to chuſe worthy paſtors, and to refuſe the unworthy.

Afterwards when a new biſhop was choſen in any church, it came to be the cuſtom to invite the neighbouring biſhops to attend and aſſiſt on the occaſion; and while this was voluntary on both ſides, there was a decency and propriety in it; as it ſhewed the readineſs of the neighbouring biſhops to receive the new one as a friend and brother. But this innocent cuſtom had bad conſequences, as the attendance of the neighbouring biſhops on the occaſion, from being *cuſtomary*, came to be conſidered as *neceſſary*; and as a conſiderable number had uſually attended, it came to be a rule, that it could not be done without the concurrence of *three*, one of whom laid his hand on the head of the new biſhop, when he was recommended to the bleſſing of God by prayer. In the third century this was always done by the metropolitan biſhop; at leaſt it was never done without his conſent or order. The ſecond council of Nice ordered that biſhops ſhould be choſen by [illegible] biſhops. But in the Weſt the people pre[illegible] their right of chuſing their biſhops till aft[illegible] reign of Charlemaigne and his ſons; and it [illegible] not taken from them till the council of A[illegible]on in 1050†.

* Baſnage Hiſtoire des Egliſes Reformeſs, vol. iii. p. 25.
† Ib. p. 24.

The uſual ceremony in appointing a biſhop was the *impoſition of hands*, which, as I have obſerved, was originally nothing more than a geſture which was always made uſe of when prayer was made for any particular perſon. What is impoſition of hands, ſays Auſtin, but the prayer that is made over the perſon *? Accordingly we find that this ceremony was not always thought neceſſary. For inſtead of impoſing hands on the biſhops of Alexandria, they only placed them on their chair, a cuſtom which continued many centuries †.

Though biſhops were originally no other than preſbyters the manner of their ordination being the ſame, and the preſbyters diſcharging every part of the office of biſhop; no ſooner was the diſtinction between them eſtabliſhed, than the biſhops began to appropriate certain functions to themſelves. It appears by the act of the third council of Carthage, that whereas before prieſts had the power of aſſigning the time of public penance, and of giving abſolution, as alſo of conſecrating virgins, and of making the chriſm (or that mixture of oil and balm with which one of the unctions at baptiſm was made) without the advice of the biſhop, all theſe things were forbidden by theſe canons, and given to the biſhops‡.

* De baptiſmo contra Donatiſtas, lib. iii. cap. xvi. Opera, vol. vii. p. 410.

† Baſnage, vol. iii. p. 29. ‡ Sueur A. D. 397.

But

But the principle thing by which the biſhops were diſtinguiſhed afterwards was the power of *confirming* the baptized, when that chriſm was applied.

After the reign of Adrian, when Jeruſalem was utterly deſtroyed, and the Jews diſperſed, an opinion began to prevail among chriſtians, that their miniſters ſucceeded to the characters, rights, and privileges of the Jewiſh prieſthood; and this was another ſource of honour and profit to the clergy. Upon this the preſbyters aſſumed the ſtile and rank of *prieſts*, biſhops that of *high prieſts*, and deacons that of *Levites* *.

The principle occaſion of the great diſtinction that was made between the clergy and the people, between the biſhops and the preſbyters, and alſo among the biſhops themſelves, was their aſſembling in ſynods, to deliberate about affairs of common concern, a cuſtom which began about the middle of the ſecond century; for it cannot be traced any higher. By this means the power of the clergy was conſiderably augmented, and the privileges of the people diminiſhed. For though at firſt theſe biſhops, aſſembled in convocation, acknowledged themſelves to be no more than the deputies of the people, they ſoon dropped that ſtile, and made decrees by their own au-

* Moſheim, vol. i. p. 146,

thority, and at length claimed a power of preſcribing both in matters of faith and of diſcipline.

For the more orderly holding of theſe aſſemblies, ſome one biſhop in a large diſtrict was employed by common conſent to ſummon them, and to preſide in them; and this being generally the biſhop of the metropolis, or the city in which the civil governor reſided, he was called the *metropolitan* or *archbiſhop*. The term Archbiſhop was firſt uſed by Athanaſius afterwards by Epiphanius, and from the year 430, it was common in the church*.

When the clergy of ſeveral provinces aſſembled, they appointed officers with a more extenſive juriſdiction, and called them *Patriarchs*, or *Primates*. This laſt term was not uſed before the time of Leo I. That of *patriarch* was firſt uſed by the Montaniſts, and in time came to be applied to the five principal ſees of Rome, Conſtantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jeruſalem†. Theſe patriarchs were diſtinguiſhed by particular rights and privileges. They alſo conſecrated the biſhops of their reſpective provinces. They aſſembled them yearly in council, and all important controverſies were referred to their deciſion, eſpecially where the biſhops were concerned; and they appointed vicars or deputies to act for them

* Sueur, A. D. 281. † Ib.

in

in the remoter provinces. Several places, however, in the fifth century maintained their independence on theſe patriarchs; and both the emperors and the general councils were obſtacles in the way of their ambition*.

Many of theſe abuſes were promoted by the conſtitutions of Conſtantine, who was the firſt perſon that aſſembled a *general council*, to which all the biſhops of the chriſtian world were invited. Having made a new diviſion of the empire for civil purpoſes, he adapted the external government of the church to it. When this diviſion was completed, thoſe who make the correſpondence between the civil and eccleſiaſtical governments the moſt exact, ſay that the *biſhops* correſponded to thoſe magiſtrates who preſided over ſingle cities; the *metropolitan*, or *archbiſhop*, to the proconſuls or preſidents of provinces, comprehending ſeveral cities; the *primates* to the emperors vicars, or lieutenants, each of whom governed in one of the thirteen great dioceſes; into which the whole empire was divided; and the *patriarchs* to the *præfecti prætorii*, each of whom had ſeveral dioceſes under them. But it is not probable that this ſubdiviſion was ever exactly obſerved. However, the government of the church anſwered much more exactly to the government of the ſtate in the Eaſt than in the

* Moſheim, vol. i. p. 372.

Weſt; and in the weſtern parts of Africa there was little or no correſpondence between them *.

In conſequence of this arrangement, a biſhop in a metropolitan city acquired the power of ordaining and depoſing the biſhops of the cities dependent upon his metropolis, and alſo of terminating their differences and providing for their wants in general. But this power was not abſolute; ſince the metropolitan could do nothing without the conſent of the biſhops of the province. There were alſo ſome biſhops who had only the title of metropolitan, without any power annexed to it †.

As the metropolitans followed the rank of their metropolis, ſo the patriarchs or *Exarchs*, as they were ſometimes called, followed the condition of the capital cities of their dioceſe. Thus as Antioch was the capital city of the Eaſt, containing fifteen provinces, the biſhop of that city exerciſed a juriſdiction over all the metropolitans, having a power of aſſembling the councils of the dioceſes, &c ‡. Conſtantinople being made the ſeat of the empire, the biſhop of it, not content with the title of metropolitan, or even of Exarch, was firſt honoured with that of *Patriarch* as more expreſſive of dignity and pre-eminence; and thence he took occaſion to give a greater extent

* Anecdotes, p. 75. † Ib. p. 63. ‡ Ib. p. 65.

to

to his patriarchate, ſo as to encroach upon the province of the patriarch of Rome*.

As the higher clergy roſe above the inferior, ſo theſe were not wanting to themſelves, but magnified their reſpective offices in proportion. In the fourth century thoſe preſbyters and deacons who filled the firſt ſtations of thoſe orders, obtained the name of *arch-preſbyters* and *arch-deacons*, and alſo obtained more power than the reſt of their brethren†. It was a conſiderable time, however, before the offices of prieſts and deacons came to be confounded as they now are in many reſpects. But when there was peculiar profit or honour in any of the functions of deacons or archdeacons, they were occaſionally beſtowed upon the prieſts, who retained the name of the lower office. An inſtance of this we have not only in the preſent office of *archdeacon* in the church of England, but in the *deans* and *chapters* of cathedral churches.

In conſequence of all theſe changes, there did not remain at the concluſion of the fourth century, ſo much as a ſhadow of the antient conſtitution of the chriſtian church; the privileges of the preſbyters and people having been uſurped by the biſhops, who did not fail to aſſume the ſtate and dignity ſuited to their new diſtinctions. Indeed, long before this time, and even before

* Anecdotes, p. 73. † Moſheim, vol. i. p. 290.

the empire became chriſtian, a ſpirit of pride and ambition, that very ſpirit againſt which our Saviour ſo frequently and earneſtly cautioned his diſciples, had got faſt hold of many of the chriſtian biſhops. We find in the writings of Cyprian, that in his time many biſhops aſſumed great ſtate, with ſplendid enſigns of power, as a princely throne, ſurrounded with officers, &c. The preſbyters and deacons alſo imitated them in ſome meaſure; and this laſt order, being above the offices to which they were originally appointed, had them done by inferior officers created on purpoſe, as door keepers, readers, grave-diggers, &c.

The pride of the biſhops was ſo great in the fourth century, and they ſet themſelves ſo much higher than the prieſts, that Ærius a Semiarian, and a great reformer, thought it neceſſary, to urge among his principal tenets, that biſhops were not diſtinguiſhed from preſbyters by any divine right; but that, according to the New Teſtament, their office and authority was intirely the ſame. His doctrine in general, by which he endeavoured to bring the diſcipline of the church to its priſtine ſtate, excited much diſturbance in ſeveral provinces of Aſia Minor*.

The wealth and power of the biſhops of the greater ſees were ſoon very conſiderable, ſo as

* Moſheim, vol. i. p. 314.

to

ſo make them reſemble princes. Prætextatus, deſigned conſul, being preſſed to embrace chriſtianity, ſaid, according to Marcellinus, "Make "me biſhop of Rome, and I will become a chriſ-"tian." And yet the propriety of the clergy in general having no independent fortunes, as well as their not enriching their families out of the revenues of the church, was very evident in thoſe times. Conſtantine prohibited by an edict any rich man to enter into the church. Jerom was of opinion that none of the clergy ſhould have any property of their own; and Auſtin admitted none into his church who did not firſt diſpoſe of all their goods. He did not, however, think this abſolutely neceſſary, but only for their greater perfection *.

Sometimes the revenues of a church were not ſufficient for the maintenance of the clergy; and in that caſe it was not thought improper that they ſhould contribute to their own maintenance by their labour. In ſome caſes this was expreſsly enjoined. Thus the fourth council of Carthage, held in 389, ordered the clergy and monks to gain their livelihood by ſome trade, provided it did not divert them from the duties of their office †.

It was very early thought to be of great importance that the clergy ſhould have no ſecular

* Simon on Church Revenues, p. 24. † Sueur, A. D. 389.

care

care that would engage much of their thoughts, and attention. The apoſtolical canons, which, though ſpurious, were written in the fourth century, order that biſhops ſhould not meddle with the adminiſtration of public affairs; and that if they did, they ſhould be depoſed. The ſame orders were given by the councils of Chalcedon, Carthage, Ments, &c. Nay, it appears by the letters of Cyprian, that a clergyman could not even be a guardian or truſtee to a child. With this view Conſtantine exempted the clergy from all public and civil employments. But for the ſake of gain, the clergy of thoſe times were too ready to undertake any office or employment whatever. Chryſoſtom laments that eccleſiaſtics, abandoning the care of ſouls, became ſtewards, aud farmers of taxes, employments unbecoming their holy miniſtry. Biſhops, he ſaid, ſhould have nothing but food and raiment, that they may not have their deſires drawn after worldly things *.

But at the ſame time that Conſtantine and other emperors releaſed the clergy from all obligation to duties of a civil nature, they gave them ſecular buſineſs in another way, viz. by enforcing the rules of church diſcipline, and by giving the biſhops the cognizance of all eccleſiaſtical affairs, and eccleſiaſtical perſons, ſuch as had before been

* In 1 Tim. v. 17. Opera, vol. x. p. 1605.

brought

brought to the ſecular judges*, and Juſtinian greatly enlarged this kind of authority †. The clergy having thus taſted of civil power, ſoon got a fondneſs for it, which required to be reſtrained. So early as the middle of the fifth century, it was complained that the biſhops wiſhed to extend their juriſdiction, and in 452, Valentinian III. made a law, declaring that a biſhop had no power to judge even the clergy, but with their own conſent ‡.

In this age, and indeed much later, it was far from being thought improper that the *general regulation* of eccleſiaſtical matters ſhould be in the hands of the ſupreme civil power. Conſtantine made many laws in eccleſiaſtical matters, as concerning the age, the qualification, and duties of the clergy; and Juſtinian added many more. Appeals were made to the emperors againſt the injuſtice of the ſynods. They received them, and appointed ſuch biſhops to hear and try the cauſes, as happened to be about the court. The emperors called ſeveral councils, they even ſat in them, and confirmed their decrees. This was the conſtant practice of the Roman emperors, both in the Eaſt and in the Weſt; and when the empire was divided into many leſſer ſovereignties, thoſe petty princes continued to act the ſame part.

* Sueur, A. D. 356. † Anecdotes, p. 125.
‡ Fleury's ſeventh Diſcourſe, p. 9.

Though

Though the regulations eſtabliſhed by the clergy were numerous in the time of Conſtantine, they contained nothing that could juſtly excite the jealouſy of the emperors; becauſe it was then univerſally agreed, that the emperors ought to regulate the eccleſiaſtical diſcipline. One book of the Theodoſian code is wholly employed on regulations reſpecting the perſons and goods of eccleſiaſtics*.

A kind of eccleſiaſtical power was alſo allowed to many rich laymen, as, in many caſes, they had the appointment of the biſhops; at leaſt they could not be appointed without their conſent. This right of *Patronage* was introduced in the fourth century, to encourage the opulent to erect a number of churches; which they were the more induced to do, by having the power of appointing the miniſters who were to officiate in them. And it was an old heathen opinion, that nations and provinces were happy, and free from danger, in proportion to the number of the temples they contained †.

As it was deemed inconſiſtent with the clerical character to have any ſecular concerns, ſo in this age this idea, together with that of the greater purity of the unmarried ſtate, made it to be thought not quite proper for the clergy to have

* Anecdotes, p. 99. † Moſheim, vol. iii. p. 301.

wives

wives and families, leſt their thoughts ſhould be diſtracted by the cares of this life; though marriage was not abſolutely prohibited to the prieſts. This rigour was introduced by the Montaniſts. Theſe condemned all ſecond marriages, and this opinion of theirs generally prevailed among chriſtians afterwards; and not only did they refuſe to admit to the prieſthood thoſe who had been married twice, but even thoſe who were married at all.

So much were the minds of chriſtians in general impreſſed with theſe ſentiments, at the time that the empire became chriſtian, that it was propoſed at the council of Nice, that the biſhops, prieſts, and deacons, ſhould ceaſe to cohabit with the wives which they had married while they were laymen. But at the inſtance of Paphnutius, a venerable old confeſſor, this did not paſs into a decree; and therefore theſe Fathers contented themſelves, with ordering that prieſts who were not already married ſhould abſtain from it. But even before this, viz. at a ſynod held at Elvira, in Spain, in the year 306, celibacy was abſolutely enjoined to prieſts, deacons, and ſub-deacons[*]. However, notwithſtanding theſe regulations, and every proviſion that was made afterwards to ſecure the celibacy of the clergy, ſupported by the general opinion of chriſtians, the marriage of prieſts was not uncommon in many parts of the chriſtian world, quite down to the reformation.

[*] Sueur, A. D. 306.

When

When learning became leſs common among the laity in the weſtern parts of the world, even the clergy were often found to be very ignorant; though it was remarkable that there was more literature at this time in Britain, which had then ſuffered leſs by the invaſion of barbarous nations, than in other parts of the empire. When Conſtantine had appointed a council at Conſtantinople, Agathon biſhop of Rome, made an apology for the two biſhops whom he ſent thither as his legates, on account of their want of learning; ſaying, that to have had a *theologian*, he muſt have ſent to England *. Even in the Eaſt ſeveral biſhops at the councils of Epheſus and Chalcedon could not write, ſo that other perſons ſigned the decrees for them †.

It was in part to provide for the better inſtruction of the clergy, and in part alſo as an imitation of the monaſtic life, which roſe in its credit as the clergy ſunk in the public eſteem, that firſt Euſebius biſhop of Verceil, and after him Auſtin, formed in his houſe a ſociety of eccleſiaſtics, who lived in common, having him, the biſhop, for their father and maſter; and in time this inſtitution gave riſe to the *canons* and *prebends* of cathedral churches ‡.

* Sueur, A. D. 680. † Jortin's Remarks, vol. iv. p. 277.
‡ Sueur, A. D. 395.

SECTION

SECTION II.

The Hiſtory of the Clergy from the Fall of the Roman Empire in the Weſt, to the Reformation.

IN the former period we have ſeen a very conſiderable departure from the proper character of preſbyters or biſhops, in thoſe who bore that title in the chriſtian church. But in this we ſhall ſee a much greater departure, and through the increaſing ignorance and ſuperſtition in the laity, we ſhall find ſuch a degree of *power* aſſumed by the clergy, as was nearly terminating in the entire ſubjection of every thing to their will. But in the mean time the different orders of thoſe who ſuſtained a religious character were a check upon each other.

In the firſt place I ſhall repeat what was obſerved with another view in a former part of this work, viz. that a conſiderable change took place in the idea of the powers ſuppoſed to be given to prieſts by their ordination, and conſequently in the form of ordination. Originally nothing was neceſſary to the conferring of holy orders but *prayer*, and the *impoſition of hands*. But in the tenth and eleventh centuries, after the introduction of the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation, a new form

form was obſerved, viz. the delivery to the prieſt of the veſſels in which the euchariſt was celebrated, with a form of words, expreſſing the communication of a power of *offering ſacrifices to God*, and of *celebrating maſſes*. Alſo a new benediction was added, which reſpected the new doctrine of penance and abſolution. For the biſhop, in laying on his hands, ſays, *Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt. Whoſe ſins ye remit they are remitted, and whoſe ſins ye retain they are retained.* According to the ſyſtem now received in the church of Rome, the prieſts have two diſtinct powers, viz. that of *conſecrating*, and that of *abſolving*. They are ordained to the former by the delivery of the veſſels, and to the latter by the biſhop alone laying on his hands, and ſaying, *Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt*, &c. And it is ſaid that the biſhop and prieſts laying on their hands *jointly*, which from antient cuſtom is ſtill retained among them, and which was the only proper ceremony of ordination, is nothing more than declaring, as by their ſuffrage, that ſuch a perſon ought to be ordained *.

In the former period we ſaw that the biſhops began to reſerve to themſelves the power of confirming after baptiſm. This was fully aſſerted in this period. When the Bulgarians were converted to chriſtianity, which was in the ninth

* Burnet on the Articles, p. 355.

century,

century, and their prieſts had both baptized and confirmed the new converts, pope Nicholas ſent biſhops among them, with orders to confirm even thoſe who had been already confirmed by the prieſts*. However, when the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation was eſtabliſhed, it was not poſſible that the biſhops, with reſpect to their ſpiritual power, ſhould ſtand higher than the prieſts: for what power can be ſuperior to that of making a God? And yet we find that the ſchoolmen endeavoured to make the epiſcopate to be a higher degree and extenſion of the prieſthood.

In this period the prieſts aſſumed ſeveral new badges, or ſigns of their character, and theſe were generally borrowed from the heathen ritual. Thus the *ſhaven head* and *ſurplices* were borrowed from the Egyptian prieſts, and the *croſier*, or *paſtoral ſtaff*, was the *lituus* of the Roman augurs†.

Now alſo we find what ſeems to be a quite new order in the church, but in fact it was only an extenſion of power in the orders that exiſted before, without any addition to the ſpiritual character. This is the rank of *Cardinal* in the church of Rome. Theſe cardinals, though they were not heard of in former times, now have the rank

* Burnet on the Articles, p. 338.

† Hiſtory of Popery, vol. iii. p. 340. 355.

of princes in the church, with the ſole power of chuſing the pope. It is about the end of the ſixth century, and eſpecially in the letters of pope Gregory, that we firſt meet with the term *cardinal prieſts* and *cardinal deacons*, but they were then in many other churches, beſides that of Rome *.

As the term *cardinal* ſignifies *chief*, or the *principal*, the cardinal prieſts in the church of Rome are ſuppoſed by ſome to have been thoſe prieſts whom Marullus, mentioned above, ſet over the twenty-five pariſhes into which he divided the church of Rome, with prieſts and deacons under them, ſo that being next in rank to the pope they roſe in power and wealth as he did. But till the eleventh century theſe cardinal prieſts held no conſiderable rank, and they were not admitted into their councils, till the year 964. Or, though they might aſſiſt at them, and likewiſe at the nomination of the popes, as part of the body of the clergy, they were always named after the biſhop; but from this time it became the intereſt of the popes to advance their dignity. Still, however, there remains traces of their former rank. For the popes never call themſelves cardinals, but biſhops. They alſo call biſhops their *brothers*, but the cardinals their *beloved children*.

* Anecdotes, p. 222.

It

It was only in the year 1059 that the cardinals appear to be neceſſarily joined with the clergy in the election of a pope, but about a hundred years after this they obtained of Alexander III. that they ſhould have the ſole nomination; and ſince that time they have been continually gaining new privileges and dignities. They are now conſidered as the pope's great council, and no oath of fidelity is required of them. Innocent IV. in 1244, ordained that when the cardinals rode out they ſhould always wear a red hat, to ſhew that they were ready to ſhed their blood in the cauſe of the church; and Paul II. about the year 1471, ordained that they ſhould wear robes of ſcarlet. Whereas all other perſons, even kings and emperors, muſt kiſs the pope's toe, the cardinals kiſs his hands and mouth. If a cardinal accidentally meets a criminal going to execution he has a power of ſaving his life; and it is ſaid that none of them can be condemned for a crime but by ſeventy-two witneſſes if he be a cardinal biſhop, ſixty-two if he be a cardinal prieſt, and twenty-ſeven if he be a cardinal deacon *.

In very early times we find a number of inferior offices in the churches, with names ſuited to their buſineſs, as *readers*, *ſub-deacons*, &c.

* Hiſtory of Popery, vol. iii. p. 55.

None of theſe, however, were conſidered as diſtinct orders of clergy, but the laſt is enumerated as ſuch by pope Eugenius.

Another order of clergy took its riſe in theſe dark ages, and was ſuggeſted by the great corruption both of the clergy and the monks in the ſeventh century; when many of the clergy belonging to great cathedrals formed themſelves into regular communities, and were called *canonici*, or *canons*, from obſerving certain *canons* or *rules*, which were given them by Chrodogang biſhop of Ments towards the middle of the ſeventh century, in imitation of what had before been done by Euſebius of Verceil, and Auſtin above-mentioned. The rule of Chrodogang was obſerved by all the canons, as that of Benedict by all the monks*.

A regulation was made reſpecting this ſubject in 1059, when, at a council in Rome, it was ordered that thoſe prieſts who kept no concubines ſhould eat and ſleep together, near the church to which they belonged, and have in common whatever revenues they had from the church, ſtudying, and living an apoſtolical life. This, ſays Fleury, was the origin of the *canons regular*. A ſimilar order was made by Nicholas II. in 1063.

* Fleury's eighth Diſcourſe, p. 9.

The

The biſhops were generally at the head of theſe ſocieties of clergy, and they were conſidered as his ſtanding council, and during the vacancy had the juriſdiction of the dioceſe. But afterwards abbots, deans, and provoſts, &c. were preferred to that diſtinction, and ſeveral of them procured exemptions from any ſubjection to the biſhop. Our Engliſh *deans and chapters* are intirely independent of the biſhop, and had their exemption from the biſhop's authority ſecured to them by a proviſo in the ſtatute of the twenty-fifth of Henry VIII *. With us thoſe Canons who have no duty whatever are called *Prebends*.

Originally biſhops were always choſen by the people, though they would be naturally much influenced in their choice by the recommendation of their preſbyters. But afterwards theſe preſbyters ſet aſide the vote of the people altogether; and when theſe *chapters* were formed, it grew into a cuſtom in England, that the prieſts who conſtituted them, being always at hand, and eaſy to be aſſembled on the deceaſe of a biſhop, ſhould chuſe him themſelves, without conſulting the reſt of the prieſts. They ſtill have the ſame power nominally, but their choice of a biſhop is always directed by the king.

When the biſhops, in conſequence of their becoming landholders, came to be of great

* Pierce's Vindication, p. 381, 384.

weight in the ſtate, it could not be a matter of indifference to the prince who ſhould be biſhops. He would naturally, therefore, intereſt himſelf in the elections. Accordingly, we ſoon find that the biſhops of Rome, though they were choſen by the people, could not be confirmed in their office without the approbation of the emperor; and this right in the prince continued undiſputed for many centuries. The great authority that Charlemaigne exerciſed reſpected chiefly the election of biſhops, of which he made himſelf maſter, with the knowledge and conſent of the popes. He did not chuſe them himſelf, but he retained the right of approving, which he ſignified by delivering to them the paſtoral ſtaff and ring which was called the *inveſtiture*, after which they were conſecrated by the neighbouring biſhops. Thus began the *rights of inveſtiture*, which was a ſource of ſo much contention afterwards *.

In the eighth general council, in 869, the emperor and all ſecular princes were forbidden to meddle with the election of any patriarch, metropolitan, or biſhop whatever. And at the council of Bonaventure, in 1087, it was decreed, that if any emperor, king or other ſecular perſon, ſhould preſume to give the inveſtiture of a biſhopric, or any other eccleſiaſtical dignity, he ſhould be excommunicated †. But by this time

* Anecdotes, p. 335. † Hiſtoire des Papes, vol ii. p. 501.

the

the popes had not only emancipated themſelves from the power of the emperor, but had arrogated to themſelves all power in matters temporal as well as ſpiritual; and on the ſubject of inveſtiture, as well as many others, the emperors of Germany, after a ſtruggle of many years, were obliged to yield. In France, however, the nomination of the biſhops was always, in fact, in the hands of the prince.

When the biſhops were little more than ſecular perſons, it is no wonder, how contrary ſoever it was to all the notions of the antients, that biſhoprics ſhould be conſidered as other eſtates, and in ſome caſes be given, or deſcend, to minors. In 925 the pope approved of the appointment of an infant to be biſhop of Rheims, another perſon having the adminiſtration of it; an example ſoon followed by princes, and an evil much complained of by Baronius. In 1478 Sixtus IV. obliged the king of Arragon by giving the biſhopric of Saragoſſa to a child of ſix years of age; a pernicious example and unheard of till then, ſays the author of Hiſtoire des Papes*. In this however this writer was miſtaken.

This example, pernicious as it is here ſaid to have been, has been followed, in one inſtance,

* Vol. iv. p. 254.

by proteſtants. For the biſhopric of Oſnaburgh, having, like other German biſhoprics, become a principality, it was agreed after the reformation, that it ſhould be held alternately by papiſts and proteſtants. At preſent it is held by the ſecond ſon of the king of England, who was appointed to it when he was quite an infant.

In the eighth century not only were private poſſeſſions made over to eccleſiaſtics and to monaſteries, but royal domains, ſuch as uſed to be held by princes; by which means they came into the poſſeſſion of whole provinces, cities, caſtles, and fortreſſes, with all the rights and prerogatives of ſovereignty; and thus churchmen became dukes, counts, and marquiſſes, and even commanded armies. The prince thought that churchmen would be more faithful to him than ſecular perſons, and expected that they would have more influence over their other vaſſals, and keep them better in ſubjection*. This aggrandiſement of the German biſhops took place chiefly upon the death of Charles le Gros, when many of the great ſubjects of the empire made themſelves independent †.

By theſe ſteps the greater clergy came to be entirely ſecular men, and to have as much to do in civil buſineſs of all kinds, as any other mem-

* Moſheim, vol. i. p. 62. † Sueur, A. D. 889.

bers

bers of the community. Thus in England it was far from exciting any wonder, in the days of popiſh darkneſs (whatever would have been thought of it in the time of the apoſtles) to ſee biſhops and mitred abbots called to the great council of the nation, along with the barons; becauſe, though churchmen, they actually were barons. The parliaments of France alſo, about the middle of the eighth century, were conſtituted in the ſame manner, the biſhops attending along with the other grandees.

This great abſurdity in politics, as well as in religion, remains as a blot in the Engliſh conſtitution to this day, the biſhops being admitted to have a ſeat in the houſe of lords, and this evil is the greater in a conſtitution which pretends to freedom. For certainly theſe biſhops, receiving their preferment from the court, and having farther expectations from it, will, in general, be in the intereſt of the court, and conſequently enemies to the rights of the people. Uſeful as this order of men is to the court, the time has been, when the preſence of the biſhops in the great council of the nation gave umbrage not only to the temporal lords, but to the ſovereign. Queen Elizabeth more than once expreſſed her diſlike of the cloſe attendance of the biſhops at court and in parliament, and ſhe even threatened to ſend them into the country, to mind their proper buſineſs.

It is not poſſible that any thing ſhould be more foreign to the office of a biſhop than to ſerve in the wars; and yet even this groſs abuſe naturally aroſe from clergymen being in poſſeſſion of the great fiefs which were held by military ſervice. And the habits of thoſe who were made biſhops in thoſe times were ſuch, as to make them not wiſh to be exempted from that obligation. In the ſeventh century, ſays Fleury, barbarians, being admitted into the clergy, introduced their habits of hunting and fighting; and from that time the biſhops poſſeſſing large eſtates were under obligation to furniſh men for the defence of it. Charlemaigne excuſed the biſhops from ſerving in perſon, but required them to ſend their vaſſals *. But before his time ſome biſhops diſtinguiſhed themſelves in the wars in Italy, and ſo early as the year 575 †.

The impropriety of this practice was, however, ſoon perceived, and afterwards expreſs laws were made to prevent biſhops from appearing in the field in perſon. Mezerai ſays, that, at the beginning of the tenth century, biſhops and abbots notwithſtanding the prohibition of councils, ſtill bore arms, and went to the wars; and the cuſtom continued far into the third race of the French kings ‡.

* Fleury, vol. xiii. p. 28. † Sueur. ‡ Ibid. A. D. 989.

The

The utter incompetency of the biſhops for the duties of their office, and the turn of the age in general, contributed to give them the ſame fondneſs for war that other perſons of rank in the ſtate had. And when they could not act contrary to the letter of the law, they ſometimes had recourſe to methods of evading it, which are ridiculous enough. In the thirteenth century, ſays Jortin, in was an axiom, that the church abhors the ſhedding of blood. Therefore biſhops and archbiſhops went to the battle armed with clubs, and made no ſcruple to knock down an enemy, and beat and bruiſe him to death, though they held it unlawful to run him through with a ſword *.

At length the laws got the better of this cuſtom, and the clerical character being deemed an indelible one, in conſequence of the ſpiritual powers ſuppoſed to have been imparted by the ſacrament of *orders*, it was ordained, in a council of Rouen, in 1174, that clergymen who had been depoſed ſhould not, however, bear arms, as if they were laymen †.

Originally biſhops were not only carefully excluded from all buſineſs of a ſecular nature, but in the exerciſe of their ſpiritual power, they were much reſtrained by the civil magiſtrates, even after they became chriſtians. Juſtinian, who had

* Remarks, vol. v. p. 388. † Fleury.

a great

a great zeal for the church, forbad the biſhops to excommunicate any perſon before the cauſe of it had been proved in form; and this was ſo far from giving offence, that pope John II. thanked the emperor for his zeal in theſe reſpects*.

But in this period we find the biſhops not only exerciſing their ſpiritual power without the leaſt controul, but encroaching greatly on the civil power, and controuling princes themſelves in the exerciſe of their proper authority. To this many circumſtances contributed, but nothing more than the admiſſion of the great clergy to ſeats in the aſſemblies of the ſtate. The ignorance of the laity alſo gave great power to the clergy. As theſe were the only people who could read or write they were univerſally ſecretaries, ſtewards, treaſurers, &c. Hence the word *clerk*, which originally ſignified a *clergyman* (*clericus*) came to denote an office in the law†.

Owing to theſe cauſes and to the negligence of the princes, who were much weakened by their diviſions in the ninth century; the biſhops were almoſt maſters of the kingdoms of France and Germany, diſpoſing of every thing at their pleaſure. Though Arnoul, archbiſhop of Rheims, was a traitor, and deſerving of the greateſt puniſhment, two kings of France, Hugh and Robert,

* Anecdotes, p. 171. † Fleury's ſeventh Diſcourſe, p. 12. 19.

did

id not pretend to have him judged except by ıe clergy, in conſequence of which he ran no ſque with reſpect to his *life*, and could only have een depoſed; and by means of the popes he was ɔnfirmed in his ſee, and continued in it to his eath*.

The Cruſades contributed much to the adancement of the clergy; the Cruſaders leaving ıeir eſtates to their management, and ſometimes lling them, in order to equip themſelves for ıoſe diſtant expeditions†.

The ceremony of *conſecration*, which was inoduced in the middle of the eighth century, fforded the prieſts a pretence to intermeddle ith the rights of princes. For in putting on the rown they ſeemed to *give* the kingdom on the art of God‡; and this ceremony was ſoon eemed ſo neceſſary by the ſuperſtitious people ıat no coronation was deemed valid without it, ı conſequence of which the prieſts had a real egative on the claims of kings, and in caſe of a ontеſt the party favoured by the clergy was ſure ɔ prevail.

Alſo the conſequence of the excommunicaions of thoſe times, which was a cutting off of all ıtercourſe between the excommunicated perſons

* Sueur, A. D. 991. † Hiſt. des Papes, vol. ii. p. 527.
‡ Fleury, vol. xiii. p. 30.

and

and the reſt of the world, affected the prince as well as the people, For the man who was not deemed worthy to tranſact any civil buſineſs, was certainly unfit to be a king. After the death of Louis V. Charles of Lorraine was the preſumptive heir to the crown of France; but the clergy, who were then the moſt powerful order in the ſtate, having excommunicated him, he was reckoned diſqualified to wear the crown.

But the firſt remarkable attempt upon the rights of royalty by prieſts was the depoſition of Vamba, king of the Viſigoths in Spain, at the twelfth council of Toledo, in 681. On the pretence of his being a *penitent*, he had been cloathed with the monaſtic habit, though it was unknown to himſelf, his diſorder having made him inſenſible. For the two characters of *monk* and *king* were deemed to be incompatible. The ſecond example was that of Louis le Debonaire, who had likewiſe been in a ſtate of penitence, after which the biſhops who impoſed the penance, pretended that he could not reſume the royal dignity *. The opinion that biſhops had a power of depoſing kings, made ſuch progreſs in the eighth and ninth centuries, that the kings themſelves acquieſced in it †.

The primary cauſe of the temporal power of the clergy was the *wealth* which they acquired

* Fleury, vol. xiii. p. 30. † Ibid. ſeventh Diſcourſe, p. 12.

by

by the liberality of the laity; which, in thoſe ſuperſtitious times, knew no bounds. Donations for pious uſes were ſo profuſe, as to threaten the utter extinction of all merely civil property; ſo that no effectual ſtep could be put to it, but by laymen aſſuming eccleſiaſtical titles, and by degrees reſuming their property, in the character of lay-impropriations, which has been a ſubject of great complaint to the clergy. This was certainly an abuſe and an irregularity; but one evil is often made uſe of, in the courſe of divine providence, to correct another.

The notion that temporal and ſpiritual goods had ſuch an affinity, that the one might be procured by means of the other, could not fail to operate in favour of the wealth, and conſequently of the temporal power of the clergy. Theſe were the venders of a valuable commodity, and the rich laity were the purchaſers. And were not many antient writings and charters, &c. ſtill extant, we ſhould not believe how nearly the grant of money and lands to the church, for the good of mens ſouls, approached to the form of a bargain and ſale in other caſes. The grants by which eſtates, &c. were made to the church, were often expreſs ſtipulations for the good of their own ſouls, and thoſe of others.

Thus when Ethelwolf tithed the kingdom of England, he ſaid, "It was for the good of his own "ſoul, and thoſe of his anceſtors." An act of king Stephen

Stephen ſays, " I Stephen, by the grace of God, " king, being deſirous of ſharing with thoſe who " barter earthly things for heavenly felicity, and " moved thereto by the love of God, and for the " good of my own ſoul, and of my father and " mother, and the ſouls of all my relations, and " my royal anceſtors; to wit, of king William my " grandfather, king Henry my uncle, &c. do, by " the advice of my barons, give to God and the " holy church of St. Peter, and the monks there- " of, the tithes of all lands, &c *."

Wealth and power generally go hand in hand, and the one will never fail to introduce the other. With the clergy it was their ſpiritual power that was the cauſe of their wealth, and their wealth contributed to create their temporal power. But before the clergy aſſumed any proper power over the laity, they exempted themſelves from their juriſdiction, which they began to do very early, and with the conſent of the chriſtian emperors, who did not wiſh to ſee perſons of an order which they ſo much reſpected brought into the ordinary civil courts. It was therefore only in extreme caſes that any of the clergy were brought before them. Athalaric, the Gothic king of Italy, approved of this cuſtom †.

Moreover, as the chriſtian emperors had a reſpect for the clergy, and a confidence in them,

* P. 39. † Anecdotes, p. 188.

they

they choſe to extend the effects of church cenſures; whereby it was in the power of the clergy to prevent or puniſh many offences of a civil nature, ſo that in time all the biſhops had courts of their own; and when the popes got power, it was neceſſary that the power of the biſhops ſhould riſe in ſome proportion to it. Boniface VIII. made a decree by which the biſhops might at all times have their auditories, and conſequently put the accuſed in priſon. But this was not much regarded, nor had the eccleſiaſtics a priſon before the pontificate of Eugenius I *.

By degrees the dignity of the prieſts roſe ſo much higher than that of the temporal powers, that it was deemed a thing abſolutely intolerable, that a clergyman ſhould be ſubject to any temporal tribunal; and as the canon law did not puniſh with *death*, the clergy enjoyed almoſt an abſolute impunity for the commiſſion of any crime whatever. And in thoſe dark and ignorant ages, the diſpoſition of the clergy to violence, and crimes of every kind, was little, if at all, leſs than that of the laity. It appears in the reign of Henry III. of England, that more than a hundred murders had been committed by clergymen, whom the civil powers could not bring to juſtice †. As to the higher ranks of the clergy, it was hardly poſſible that they ſhould be pu-

* Anecdotes, p. 119. † Hiſtory of Popery, vol. iii. p. 130

niſhed for any crime, on account of their right of appeal to Rome, and the certainty of their finding protection there, eſpecially if they had any difference with their ſovereign. Beſides, in thoſe times no clergyman could be puniſhed capitally without previous *degradation*, and a prieſt could not be degraded but by eight biſhops, to aſſemble whom was a great expence.

In that reign of ſuperſtition, the clergy could be in no want of plauſible *pretences* to interpoſe in civil affairs. Among others, they pretended to have juriſdiction in all caſes of *ſin*, in conſequence of which, ſays Fleury, the biſhops made themſelves judges in all law ſuits, and even in all wars among ſovereigns, and in fact made themſelves to be the only ſovereigns in the world *. In a council of Narbonne, in 1054, perſons who refuſed to pay their debts were excommunicated †. Had church cenſures extended to no other caſes than theſe, the abuſe would not have been much complained of.

The caſe in which the clergy interfered the moſt was in things relating to *marriage*. For as inceſt is a ſin, they made themſelves judges of the degrees of relationſhip within which it was lawful to contract marriage. And as diſpenſations for marriage within thoſe degrees was very

* Seventh Diſcourſe, p. 20. † Fleury, A. D. 1054.

gainful

gainful, it was their intereſt to extend thoſe degrees, that diſpenſations might be more frequently wanted.

Before the time of Juſtin II. eccleſiaſtical canons began to encroach upon the province of the ſecular power in this reſpect, forbidding the marriage of couſins, and of the children of couſins, and introducing a different method of counting the degrees of relationſhip, which is not more antient than pope Gregory or Zachary. According to Fleury, the difference between the canon and the civil law on this ſubject aroſe about the year 1065, when two degrees in the civil law were made one by the canon law, the former counting upwards to the common anceſtor, and then down again to the perſons whoſe degree of relationſhip was to be determined. Whereas the cuſtom now was to begin with the common anceſtors, and count to the more remote of the two parties. Brothers, therefore, who, according to the civil law, were in the ſecond degree of relationſhip, according to the canon law were in the firſt; and couſins german, which were in the fourth degree, were by the canons brought to the ſecond, &c*.

Beſides this advantageous method of counting the degrees, the clergy likewiſe added to the number of degrees within which it was not lawful

* Fleury, vol. xiii. p. 147.

to contract marriage. Mezarai ſays, that about the end of the tenth century, the degrees of relationſhip within which marriage was prohibited were extended to ſeven, which very much embarraſſed ſovereign princes, who were generally related to one another within thoſe degrees.

Another method of extending the degrees of relationſhip was by conſidering the relations of one party; as thoſe of the other. In 557, a council at Paris forbad the marriage of a wife's ſiſter; many perſons having then done it, after the example of king Clotaire, who had married the ſiſter of his deceaſed wife *. Relation by adoption was alſo made to have the ſame effect as that by nature. In 734, the pope not only adviſed to diſſolve the marriage of a man with a woman whoſe child he had before adopted, but to puniſh him with death †. And what will be thought perhaps more extraordinary, the ſpiritual relationſhip, as it was called, or that of godfather and godmother, was made to receive the ſame effect as a natural relation of the ſame name ‡.

The number of lawful marriages were alſo reduced. Second marriages were alſo reckoned improper, and with reſpect to the clergy, abſolutely unlawful, it being ſoon imagined to be forbidden by Paul, who ſays, *a biſhop muſt be the*

* Sueur. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid. A. D. 995.

huſband

huſband of one wife. Epiphanius mentions a perſon who being a widower married a ſecond wife, that he might not be made a prieſt. Jerom ſays we do not deſire, but we allow of ſecond marriages*. In 901 the patriarch of Conſtantinople, refuſed to marry the emperor Leo a fourth time, alleging a law which he himſelf had made, that no perſon ſhould marry more than twice. After much altercation on the ſubject, it was agreed in 902, that third marriages ſhould be lawful, but not fourth†.

It was thought proper in very early times, that a new married couple ſhould have the benediction of the biſhop or a prieſt. Thus in the fourth council of Carthage, in 398, it was ordered that the bride and bridegroom ſhould be preſented to a prieſt for his benediction, and that, out of reſpect to it, they ſhould abſtain from commerce the firſt night‡. This cuſtom of giving the benediction prepared the way for the clergy being conſidered as the only perſons before whom marriage could be legally contracted, and the laity were effectually excluded when matrimony was made one of the ſeven ſacraments. Marriage alſo came under the cognizance of the clergy by means of the *oath* which the parties took to be faithful to each other. For Fleury ſays the clergy included within their juriſdiction every

* Le Clerc's Hiſtoria Eccleſiaſtica, A. D. 158. † Sueur. ‡ Ib.

thing in which oaths were concerned, as well as where the cauſe had any connection with things ſpiritual. Thus on account of the ſacrament of marriage, they took cognizance of marriage portions, caſes of dowry, of adultery, of legitimacy, and alſo of wills; becauſe it was ſuppoſed that the church ought not to be without ſome pious legacy *.

The clergy alſo claimed entire juriſdiction in caſes of *hereſy* and *ſchiſm*, and in matters where the civil law had not interfered, as in reſpect to uſury and concubinage. And becauſe the crime of hereſy drew after it the loſs of eſtates, and of all civil rights, even with reſpect to the ſovereign, the clergy could always accuſe of this crime any perſon whom they meant to deſtroy; and if the prince would not ſubmit to their ſentence, he was accuſed of not believing the *power of the keys*, and accuſed of hereſy †.

The ordinary juriſdiction of the biſhops was much reſtrained by the *pope's legates*, eſpecially from the eleventh century; and the biſhops thus reſtrained, endeavoured to extend their juriſdiction at the expence of the lay judges by three methods, viz. the quality of the perſons, the nature of the cauſes, and the multiplication of the judges. Boniface VIII. ordained that laymen

* Fleury's ſeventh Diſcourſe, p. 17. † Ibid.

ſhould

ſhould have no power over eccleſiaſtical perſons or goods, and the biſhops made as many clergy as they pleaſed, by which means they drew great numbers from the temporal juriſdiction, an abuſe which was carried to an enormous extent. Becauſe widows and orphans had been protected by the biſhops in early ages, they now undertook all their cauſes, even thoſe of the widows of kings, and thoſe of kings themſelves in their minority. They alſo took cognizance in all caſes in which *lepers* were concerned. Laſtly, the biſhops multiplied judges, and thereby extended their juriſdiction, eſtabliſhing their officials in various places beſides the epiſcopal city. The archdeacons and chapters alſo did the ſame, and all theſe had their delegates, ſubdelegates, and other commiſſaries*. However, in all great cauſes, the authority of the biſhops was much leſſened by the number of appeals to the court of Rome; and afterwards the *inquiſition* alſo encroached upon the juriſdiction of the biſhops, as well as on that of the ordinary judges †.

A circumſtance which contributed not a little to make the clergy intent upon extending their authority in the ſtate, and to make them formidable in it, was their not being allowed to marry. In conſequence of this, great numbers of them became leſs attached to their reſpective countries,

* Fleury's ſeventh Diſcourſe, p. 18. † Ib. p. 23.

and made the hierarchy alone their great object. This point, however, was not eſtabliſhed without much oppoſition. A council, held at Conſtantinople under Juſtinian II. gave the prieſts leave to marry, though the popes had enjoined the contrary. Many prieſts had wives even in the Weſt about the year 1000; but in 1074, Gregory VII. decreed in council, not only that prieſts ſhould abſtain from marriage, but that they who had wives ſhould either diſmiſs them, or quit their office. But even this law was often diſregarded *.

That the true motive to this in later ages, was not a regard to purity, is evident, from its being no objection to prieſts to keep many concubines, even publicly. John Cremenſis, who came to England to hold a ſynod for the purpoſe of prohibiting the marriage of prieſts, was the very night after the council found in bed with a common proſtitute †. Father Simon ſays, that the prieſts being prohibited from marriage made no ſcruple of keeping concubines ‡. It was in 970 that a ſynod was held at Canterbury, in which it was decreed that the clergy in England ſhould either part with their wives, or their livings; a law which Dunſtan enforced with great rigour. The prieſts, however, were much averſe to this law, and therefore it was found neceſſary to hold

* Moſheim, vol. ii. p. 284. † Hiſtory of Popery, vol. iii. p. 45.
‡ On Church Revenues, p. 78.

another

another ſynod on this ſubject at Calne, four years afterwards, in which it was finally decided.

With the high rank and the wealth which the clergy acquired, it is not to be wondered that they ſhould not improve in virtue, heavenly-mindedneſs, and a careful attention to the duties of their office. Complaints of their arrogance, avarice, and voluptuouſneſs, are without end; and yet, vicious as the clergy in general were, they were reverenced almoſt to adoration by the ignorant vulgar of thoſe ages. This aroſe, in a great meaſure, from the ſentiments and cuſtoms of the northern nations before their converſion to chriſtianity; which in thoſe days conſiſted in nothing more than being taught to ſay by rote, ſome general principles of the chriſtian religion, being baptized, and changing the objects of their ſuperſtitious cuſtoms. For theſe were ſuffered to continue the ſame as before, only, inſtead of being acts of homage to their heathen deities, they were now taught to conſider them as directed to the popiſh ſaints.

Now theſe people having been before their converſion abſolutely enſlaved by their prieſts, having never been uſed to undertake any thing, even in civil or military affairs, without their council; when they became chriſtians, they tranſferred the ſame ſuperſtitious deference to their chriſtian prieſts; who, we may be ſure, did nothing

thing to check it *. In the dark ages the profligacy of the clergy perhaps exceeded that of the laity, as the ſacredneſs of their character gave them a kind of impunity. One Fabricius complains of the luxury of the clergy in his time, towards the end of the tenth century, in the following terms. They no longer ſaluted one another with the title of *brother*, but that of *maſter*; they would not learn any thing belonging to their miniſtry, but committed the whole to their vicars. Their ſtudy was to have horſes, cooks, maitres d'hotel, concubines, buffoons, and mountebanks; and they applied to the emperor for leave to hunt all ſorts of wild beaſts *.

Nothing, perhaps, can ſhew the pride of the clergy in a ſtronger light, than the decrees of the eighth general council, held at Conſtantinople, in 869, in which it was ordered that biſhops ſhould not go before princes, that they ſhould not alight from their mules or horſes, but that they ſhould be conſidered as of equal rank with princes, and emperors; that if any biſhop ſhould live in a low manner, according to the antient and ruſtic cuſtom, he ſhould be depoſed for a year; and that if the prince was the cauſe of it, that prince ſhould be excommunicated for two years. In the ſame council it was decreed that biſhops only ſhould be preſent at councils, and not ſecular

* Moſheim, vol. ii. p. 59. † Sueur. A. D. 989.

princes;

princes; for that they ought not to be even ſpectators of ſuch things as ſometimes happen to prieſts*. All writers agree in giving the moſt ſhocking picture of the depravity of all ranks of men in the tenth century. Among others, ſee Sueur, A. D. 909.

When the occupation of churchmen and temporal lords differed ſo very little, it is natural to expect that there would be no great difference in their accompliſhments. In the ninth century the ignorance of the clergy was ſo great, that few of them could either write or read. But one reaſon of this was that many noblemen and others, wanting ſufficient talents to appear to advantage in the field, retired into the church, the great endowments of which were temptations to them. The eſtates of the church were alſo often openly invaded, and the ignorant ſpoilers got poſſeſſion of the benefices †.

Britain, being removed from the ſeat of the greateſt rapine and profligacy, had a greater proportion of learned clergy than the reſt of Europe, in the greateſt part of the dark ages; and Ireland had perhaps a greater proportion than Britain, as they had ſuffered ſtill leſs by the ravages of the barbarians.

* Sueur, A. D. 869. † Moſheim, vol. ii. p. 119.

The

The very corrupt ſtate of the clergy made the monks, and their monaſteries, of great value to the chriſtian world. With them almoſt all the learning and piety of thoſe ages had an aſylum, till the approach of better times.

In the church of England there is a threefold order of miniſters, viz. biſhops, prieſts, and deacons. The deacons may baptize and preach, but not adminiſter the Lord's ſupper; the prieſts may adminiſter the Lord's ſupper, and pronounce abſolution; and only the biſhops confirm baptized perſons, ordain miniſters, and govern the church. The biſhop's diocefe is conſidered as the loweſt kind of a church, and the preſbyters are conſidered as his delegates, or curates. But the firſt Engliſh reformers conſidered biſhops and prieſts as of the ſame order, and therefore did not require that thoſe who had been ordained by prieſts ſhould be ordained again by a biſhop. Wickliffe, who began the reformation in England, admitted no more than two degrees in the miniſterial office, viz. deacons, and preſbyters, or biſhops. Theſe two, ſays he, were known in Paul's time, and others are the invention of impious pride.

There is alſo another deviation from the primitive ſtate of things in the church of England, as the people have not in general the choice of their miniſter; and the biſhops are all nominated by the court. For though the dean and chapter have

have the nominal choice, the king ſends them an expreſs order to chuſe ſuch as he ſhall direct. In the reign of Edward IV. this abſurd cuſtom was ſet aſide, and the king himſelf immediately appointed the biſhops; but the old cuſtom was renewed in the reign of queen Elizabeth.

Almoſt all the inferior miniſters are choſen by the biſhops, the chancellor, or ſome lay patrons. When a new rector is to be placed in a pariſh, the patron of the living recommends whom he pleaſes to the biſhop, and the biſhop has no power to refuſe. The rights of patronage to livings are openly bought and ſold; and it is not reckoned ſimony to buy the next right of preſentation, provided the living be not void at the time.

THE

HISTORY

OF THE

Corruptions of Chriſtianity.

PART XI.

The Hiſtory of the PAPAL POWER.

THE INTRODUCTION.

WHEN we conſider, that, originally, the biſhops of Rome were nothing more than any other biſhops, that is, the miniſters or paſtors of a ſociety of chriſtians, without any power, even within their own church, beſides that of exhortation and admonition; it is truly aſtoniſhing that the *popes*, who are no other than the ſucceſſors of thoſe biſhops, ſhould have obtained the rank and authority that they have done; and it is hardly poſſible to conceive how the one ſhould have ariſen from the other. There is not, indeed, in the whole hiſtory of human affairs, another example of ſo great a change in the condition of any order of men whatever, civil or eccleſiaſtical.

From

From being in the loweſt ſtate of perſecution, in common with other chriſtians, and having nothing to do with things of a temporal nature, they came to be the greateſt of all perſecutors themſelves, and roſe to a greater height of temporal power (and a power eſtabliſhed on the voluntary ſubjection of the mind) than almoſt any ſovereign, the moſt deſpotic by law or conſtitution ever attained. And from being mere ſubjects they came to be not only princes, but the moſt imperious lords of their former maſters; and their eccleſiaſtical power was ſtill more abſolute and extenſive than their civil power. I ſhall endeavour to point out the ſeveral ſteps by which this great change was made.

The ground of the papal pretenſions to power, in later ages, was the popes being the ſucceſſors of the apoſtle Peter, to whom was delivered by Chriſt *the keys of the kingdom of heaven.* But whatever was meant by that expreſſion, Peter himſelf aſſumed no pre-eminence over the reſt of the apoſtles. Paul oppoſed him to his face, and ſays that he himſelf was not inferior to the *very chiefeſt apoſtles.* Alſo, though it be probable that Peter was at Rome, and ſuffered martyrdom there, it is not probable that he was ever the proper biſhop of Rome, or of any particular place; the apoſtles having a general juriſdiction over the church at large, appointing and directing the conduct of all the biſhops; an office to which they appointed no ſucceſſors at all.

The

The title of *Pope (Papa)* which ſignifies *father*, was not originally peculiar to the biſhop of Rome, but in early times was commonly applied to other biſhops, eſpecially in the greater ſees. Thus Cornelius, biſhop of Rome, called Cyprian, the pope of Carthage; and it was not till about the beginning of the ſeventh century, that the biſhops of Rome appropriated that title to themſelves.

One of the moſt extraordinary circumſtances relating to the papal power, is that, though the foundations on which it reſted were entirely changed, and thoſe pretences on which the greateſt ſtreſs was laid, had not been heard of, or hinted at, for many centuries; yet being continually urged, in dark ages, they came at length to be uinverſally acknowledged, and acquieſced in, even by thoſe princes whoſe intereſt it was to oppoſe them. And in time the buſineſs tranſacted at the court of Rome was ſo great and peculiar, that nothing was more ſenſibly felt than the want of unity in it, during the great ſchiſm in the papacy. All Europe was in the deepeſt affliction on the occaſion; and inſtead of rejoicing in the diviſion of this enormous controuling power, it was the great object of princes and people, to unite the church under its own proper head. Had the ſun been divided, and its light been in danger of being extinguiſhed, the chriſtian world would hardly have been more alarmed than it was; ſo

neceſſary was the ſubjection of all chriſtians *to one ſupreme head of the church*, at that time, deemed to be. The riſe and progreſs of ſuch an amazing power, from ſo very low a beginning, is indeed a great object, and well deſerves to be conſidered with attention.

SECTION I.

Of the State of the Papal Power till the Time of Charlemaigne.

THE firſt cauſe of the increaſe of power to the popes was the ſame that enlarged the power of the biſhops of all the great cities of the empire; in conſequence of which they had the power of calling and preſiding in the aſſemblies of biſhops within the provinces to which the civil juriſdiction of their reſpective cities extended. And, by degrees, as has been obſerved before, they had the power of ordaining the biſhops in their provinces, and a negative on the choice of the people.

The biſhops of the moſt important ſees were at length diſtinguiſhed by the title of *patriarchs*, who had all equal power, and differed only with reſpect to

to rank and precedency; and in general the biſhop of Rome was conſidered as the firſt in rank, out of reſpect to the city in which he preſided. After the ſee of Rome, the preference was given to the other great ſees, in the following order, viz. thoſe of Conſtantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jeruſalem. The churches of Africa do not appear to have been ſubject to any of theſe patriarchs; and Cyprian, who was biſhop of Carthage, in the third century, had the ſame power that the biſhops of Rome had, viz. to aſſemble the biſhops of his province, to preſide in their councils, and to admoniſh his brethren *.

The proper authority of the biſhop of Rome, though he was the only perſon in Italy diſtinguiſhed by the title of *metropolitan*, did not extend over the whole of Italy, but only the ſouthern parts of it, or thoſe provinces which were called *ſuburbican*, becauſe they were ſubject to the *imperial vicar*, who reſided at Rome, while all the northern parts were ſubject to the *vicar of Italy*, as he was called, in temporal matters; and to the archbiſhop of Milan in ſpirituals; the vicar of Italy reſiding in Milan †.

But though the power of the biſhops of Rome had no legal extenſion beyond that of other patriarchs, they had much more authority and

* Moſheim, vol. i. p. 215. † Anecdotes, p. 78.

influence than other biſhops, on account of the dignity of their city, which was the capital of the Roman empire, and likewiſe on account of the great wealth and large revenues of that ſee. Moreover, as it had been the cuſtom to appeal to Rome in all great civil caſes, ſo if the biſhops of Rome were only equal to other biſhops of the great patriarchal ſees (and in early times they were probably ſuperior to them in knowledge and character) it would be natural, when differenees of opinion aroſe, for each party to wiſh to have the ſanction of the ſee of Rome. On theſe accounts appeals were more frequently made to Rome than to any other place; and this voluntary deference was afterwards *expected*, and then *inſiſted upon*, chriſtians in general having been by habit diſpoſed to yield to its authority.

The Arian controverſy afforded the biſhops of Rome ſeveral opportunities of extending their power. Athanaſius himſelf engaged the protection of pope Julius; and it was chiefly by the influence of the ſee of Rome that the trinitarian doctrine came to be eſtabliſhed. But before this time, Victor, biſhop of Rome, interpoſed his authority, but without effect, in the controverſy about the time of keeping Eaſter, proceeding ſo far as to excommunicate all the eaſtern churches, becauſe they did not conform to the cuſtom of the weſtern church in this reſpect. But no regard was paid to his deciſion, though afterwards the council

council of Nice determined the queſtion as he had done.

On this, and on other occaſions, the papal pretenſions did not paſs unnoticed, or without oppoſition. Some ſtand, though an ineffectual one, was always made to every encroachment; and the early popes themſelves, who began to uſurp a little, and to convert that into a matter of *right*, which had originally been mere *courteſy*, would have been ſhocked at the idea of a ſmall part of what was done by their ſucceſſors. A number of *decretal epiſtles* have, indeed, been alleged, as proofs that the earlieſt popes always held and exerciſed a ſovereign power in the church. But theſe were manifeſtly forged, as the papiſts themſelves now acknowledge; and many facts in the early hiſtory of the church, and of the papacy, prove, inconteſtibly, that the biſhops of Rome had no more real power than other metropolitan biſhops.

In the ſixth council of Carthage, it was concluded by the biſhops who compoſed it, that they would not give way to the encroachments of the biſhops of Rome on their rights and liberties, and they gave immediate notice to pope Celeſtine, to forbear ſending his officers among them, "leſt he "ſhould ſeem to introduce the vain inſolence of "the world into the church of Chriſt." Various other councils alſo made decrees to the ſame pur-

poſe. But when the patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch were oppreſſed by that of Conſtantinople, they had recourſe to the church of Rome; and by their example inferior biſhops appealed thither alſo, when they were oppreſſed by the biſhops of Alexandria and Antioch *. By this means the biſhops of Rome acquired a conſiderable degree of influence even in the Eaſt.

After the prevalence of the Mahometan powers in Aſia and Africa, as there remained only two rival metropolitans, viz. thoſe of Rome and Conſtantinople, they were continually at variance; and at firſt the biſhops of Conſtantinople, where the emperor reſided, had the advantage. Theſe had extended their juriſdiction ſo much before the reign of Juſtin, that it comprehended Illyricum, Epirus, Macedonia, and Achaia. Afterwards it extended to Sicily, and many places in the ſouthern parts of Italy, and they contended with the biſhops of Rome for the ſuperintendence of Bulgaria and other countries†.

The three other eaſtern patriarchates having been either aboliſhed or much reduced, the biſhops of Conſtantinople took occaſion from it to carry their pretenſions to an authority ſo much higher than before, that John, who was choſen patriarch of Conſtantinople in 585, aſſumed the

* Moſheim, vol. i. p. 375. † Anecdotes, p. 158.

title

title of *Œcumenical* or *univerſal biſhop*. This title was ſeverely condemned by Gregory the great, who was then biſhop of Rome, as tending to diminiſh the power of other biſhops. He even called it *blaſphemy*, and a name invented by the devil; adding, that whoever called himſelf, or wiſhed to be called *univerſal biſhop*, was the fore-runner of anti-chriſt *. Nay, upon this occaſion, by way of contraſt, he took the title of *Servus Servorum Dei*, or *Servant of the Servants of God*, and he was the firſt pope who uſed that ſtile in his letters †.

But not more than eighteen years after the death of this Gregory, viz. in 606, Boniface III. obtained of the emperor Phocas, that the biſhops of Rome alone ſhould, from that time, have this very title of *univerſal biſhop*. The circumſtance which made the aſſumption of this title the more odious, beſides its having been rejected with ſo much indignation by the predeceſſors of Boniface, was its being granted by one who had riſen to the empire by the murder of the preceding emperor Mauritius, his wife, and all his children; and who in this manner courted the friendſhip of the biſhop of Rome, whoſe power in the weſtern part of the empire was then very conſiderable. For the popes acquired a great acceſſion of power, and had much more influence in all civil affairs, in conſe-

* Sueur, A. D. 595. † Anecdotes, p. 206.

quence of the removal of the ſeat of empire from Rome to Conſtantinople. But they were of much more conſequence after the Lombards ſettled in Italy. For by taking part ſometimes with them, and ſometimes with the emperor, they made themſelves formidable to both, and by this means their uſurpations paſſed without cenſure.

That the authority of the ſees both of Conſtantinople and of Rome aroſe from the dignity of the cities, is evident from this circumſtance, viz. that before the year 381, the ſee of Conſtantinople had depended upon that of Heraclea, which had been the former metropolis of the province, but from that time the council ordained, according to the wiſhes of Theodoſius, that the biſhops of Conſtantinople ſhould hold the principal dignity after that of the biſhops of Rome *. But afterwards, viz. in a council held at Conſtantinople, under Juſtinian II. it was ordained that the patriarchs of Conſtantinople ſhould be equal to thoſe of Rome.

It was in the reign of Valentinian III. that, by the influence of Leo, the popes gained the greateſt acceſſion of power in the Weſt, within the period of which I am now treating. Before this time the popes had no proper authority beyond the ſuburbican provinces †. But this em-

* Sueur, A. D. 381. † Anecdotes, p. 81.

peror

peror extended their authority to all the bounds of his empire, even into Gaul, and ordered that whatever ſhould be done in that country without the authority of the pope, ſhould have no force *. The biſhops aſſembled at Rome in 378, approved of this augmentation of the power of the popes †.

An opportunity ſoon offered of making uſe of this power. For in the year 440, Chelidonius, being depoſed in Gaul, appealed to the pope, who received him into communion, and by the authority of Valentinian reinſtated him. This was the firſt encroachment that was made by the popes on the liberties of the Gallican church‡. It was not, however, till a long time after this, that any direct application was made to the popes for preferment in France. Auxanius biſhop of Arles was the firſt biſhop in France who, in the year 543, ſent to aſk for the *pallium*, or the archiepiſcopal cloak from Rome. His predeceſſor had it without aſking for; and in this caſe the pope anſwered, that he muſt firſt have the conſent of the king of France §.

After the reign of Valentinian III. the biſhops of Rome, finding their powers enlarged, and that they had the ſuperintendence of all the churches

* Baſnage, vol. i. p. 243.
† Moſheim, vol. i. p. 287.
‡ Baſnage, vol. i. p. 243.
§ Sueur, A. D. 543.

of

of the Weſt, ſent their vicars regularly into the provinces, whenever there was the leaſt pretence for it, and thus watched every opportunity of extending their juriſdiction. The firſt vicars which they eſtabliſhed were thoſe of Illyricum, and of Theſſaly. And the pope was the more readily acknowledged to be patriarch of all the Weſt by the Greeks, as well as by the Latins; as the former wiſhed to have the biſhop of Conſtantinople to be conſidered as patriarch of all the Eaſt *.

In 517, pope Hormiſdas appointed biſhops of the reſpective countries his vicars in Gaul, Spain, and Portugal. They were glad to be ſo honoured, as it gave them a rank above their brethren; and by this means the popes greatly extended their authority in thoſe countries †. But before this time, viz. in 453, the popes began to have ſpies and informers at the court of Conſtantinople. Leo recommended one of them to the emperor, calling him his *legate*, appointed by him to ſolicit at the emperor's court all things relating to the faith and peace of the church, againſt the heretics of the age. This was the beginning of the pope's legates at Conſtantinople. They were afterwards called *Apocriſiarii* ‡.

* Anecdotes, p. 144. † Sueur.

‡ Jortin's Remarks, vol. iv. p. 298.

The

The popes were alſo very attentive to ſend legates into nations newly converted, and thereby ſubjected them to their patriarchate. Thus the Bulgarians being converted, the pope immediately ſent an archbiſhop thither, which was the beginning of the conteſt between the patriarchs of Rome and thoſe of Conſtantinople *.

After the fall of the weſtern empire the popes found themſelves in a peculiarly favourable ſituation for the increaſe of their power, the emperor being then at a diſtance, and therefore obliged to take ſome pains to keep on good terms with them, in order to keep up his intereſt in the country. Thus Juſtinian paid the pope many compliments, and called the ſee of Rome the chief of all the churches, hoping by this means to drive the Goths out of Italy †.

Alſo the people of Rome, and of the neighbouring diſtricts, diſliking both the Greeks and the northern invaders, and having no other head, looked up to the popes for protection, and at length took an oath of allegiance to Gregory II. But they conſidered him as their chief, not as their maſter, meaning to form a republic, governed by its own laws ‡.

* Anecdotes, p. 145. † Sueur, A. D. 534.
‡ Anecdotes, p. 240, 246.

As

As the popes extended their power, they began to provide a broader baſis for it. Leo was the firſt who claimed juriſdiction over other churches, as ſucceſſor to St. Peter; and when it was decreed, at the council of Chalcedon, that the ſee of Conſtantinople ſhould be ſecond to that of Rome with reſpect to rank, aſſigning as a reaſon for it the pre-eminence of the city, this pope was much diſſatisfied, becauſe his pre-eminence was not founded on ſomething more ſtable than the dignity of the city, and wiſhed to have it reſt on the authority of St. Peter as the founder of the ſee *. From this time we find this foundation for the authority of the ſee of Rome urged with the greateſt confidence; and what is moſt extraordinary, it ſeems never to have been diſputed. In a ſynod held at Rome in 494, Gelaſius ſaid that the church of Rome ought to be preferred to all others, not on account of the decrees of councils, but for the words of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, when he ſaid, *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church* †. But there has been much diſpute about this decree, and the meaning of it.

It was ſome time, however, before the popes thought of claiming abſolute *infallibility*, as the ſucceſſors of an infallible apoſtle. The firſt pope

* Sueur, A. D. 451. † Ibid.

who

who ſeems to have made this claim was Agatho, who, in an epiſtle to the ſixth general council, held at Conſtantinople in 680, ſaid that the church of Rome never erred, nor can err in any point: and that all the conſtitutions of the church of Rome, ought to be received as if they had been delivered by the divine voice of St. Peter *. But before this time there had not been wanting perſons who flattered the pride of the popes by very extravagant encomiums. Thus in the fifth century Ennodius, a flatterer of pope Symmachus, maintained that the Roman pontiff was "conſtituted judge in the place of God, which he "filled as the vicegerent of the Moſt High †".

With this increaſe of real power and conſequence, we may naturally expect additional higher *titles*, and more *ſplendour*; and in this the popes were by no means deficient; and as they approached to the rank of ſovereign princes, they omitted none of the uſual forms, or ſymbols of royalty. But in this period, as they had not attained to the power, ſo they did not aſſume all the pomp that they afterwards appeared in.

As the chriſtians affected the ceremonies of the heathen worſhip, the popes were ready enough to avail themſelves of it, when it might add to their perſonal dignity. Accordingly as

* Hiſt. of Popery, vol. i. p. 5. † Moſheim, vol. i. p. 445.

the

the office of *Pontifex Maximus* had been of great dignity in Rome, and had generally been aſſumed by the emperors; from the end of the fourth century, the biſhops of Rome were often called *Pontiffs*, and their office the *Pontificate.* They were alſo ſometimes called *ſovereign prelates* or *ſovereign prieſts* *. But the title of *biſhop of biſhops* was not given to the pope ſeriouſly in the five firſt centuries.

The ceremony by which reſpect is generally ſhewn to the pope is *kiſſing his toe*, which was alſo done to the Pontifex Maximus of heathen Rome, and was demanded by Domitian, Dioclesian, and ſome others of the emperors, who were likewiſe chief pontiffs. This civility was firſt ſhewn to pope Conſtantine I. by the emperor Juſtinian II. at Nicodemia. He did it out of voluntary reſpect, but it was afterwards claimed as a right even from crowned heads †.

The cuſtom of carrying the pope on men's ſhoulders after his election, which ſeems to have been borrowed from the cuſtom of ſome of the northern nations, in the choice of their chiefs or princes, was firſt uſed by Stephen II. He alſo had all his *bulls* or *edicts*, ſealed with lead ‡. Like other ſovereigns, the popes even in this period,

* Sueur, A. D. 214. † Hiſtory of Popery, vol. ii. p. 10.
‡ Sueur, A. D. 752.

made

made uſe of the plural number, in ſpeaking of themſelves. This is ſaid to have been begun by Boniface III. about the year 606; who, in approving the choice of a biſhop, uſed the words, *Volumus et jubemus, we will and command**. Afterwards the popes proceeded to aſſume other titles, and forms, not only of royalty, but even of *divinity*; which having been firſt aſſumed by the princes of the Eaſt, were from them adopted by the Roman emperors, and from them by the popes. A particular account of them may be ſeen in Sueur, A. D. 549.

So early as the fourth century, the biſhops of Rome ſurpaſſed all their brethren in riches and ſplendour, which exceedingly dazzled the common people; and ſo great a prize being contended for, there were often great tumults in Rome on the election of a pope, attended ſometimes with murder, and violence of all kinds. Many were killed on both ſides in 368, during the conteſt between Damaſus and Urſicinus.

Notwithſtanding the power aſſumed by the popes, and though in many things they acted independently of the emperor, and even oppoſed him, they were ſtill his *ſubjects*, and upon ſome occaſions he treated them as ſuch. The election of the biſhop of Rome was not deemed valid

* Sueur, A. D. 606.

without

without the conſent of the emperor, and Juſtinian depoſed two popes. But when there was no more any empire in the Weſt, little account was made of the conſent of the emperor; though the popes kept up a formal ſubmiſſion to the emperors of the Eaſt againſt the Lombard princes till the time of Leo Iſauricus *. And though Conſtantine Pogonatus releaſed the popes from their uſual payments for their confirmation, he expreſsly retained the right of confirmation †.

The Gothic kings of Italy alſo conſidered the popes as their ſubjects. And it appeared in the diſpute between Symmachus and Laurentius, in 501, when Theodoric was king of Italy, that the popes then acknowledged the authority of the kings, though they were heretics; that they requeſted of them permiſſion to hold national councils, and that they appealed to them when they were charged with crimes, and ſubmitted to their judgment. Athalaric, to prevent ſuch miſchiefs as had been occaſioned by former ſchiſms at Rome, made a rigorous edict, preſcribing the manner in which the election of biſhops and metropolitans ſhould hereafter be made. This edict was drawn up by Caſſiodorus, and nobody conſidered this as any attack upon the authority of the church ‡.

* Anecdotes, p. 209. † Walſh's Hiſt. of the Popes, p. 97.
‡ Anecdotes, p. 155.

The

The temporal princes under whom the popes lived, ſent for them, as well as other biſhops, and employed them in embaſſies, whenever they thought proper to make uſe of them. Pope John I. was ſent by Theodoric to Conſtantinople, to obtain of the emperor Juſtinian I. the revocation of an edict, which ordained that the churches of the Arians ſhould be put into the hands of the catholics *.

When the empire of the Lombards was entirely put an end to in Italy, the nomination of the popes, at leaſt the right of confirming them, was ſtill in the hands of the temporal princes. Adrian, with his whole ſynod, acknowledged this power in Charlemaigne, and Gregory VII. was himſelf confirmed in the papacy by that very emperor whom he afterwards depoſed. Symmachus had the effrontery to maintain to the emperor Anaſtaſius, that the dignity of the pope was ſuperior to that of the emperor, as much as the adminiſtration of the things of heaven is above that of the things of the earth, and that even a common prieſt was ſuperior to him. But he was far from alleging this as a reaſon why the popes ſhould not be ſubject to the emperor in things of a temporal nature.

One of the prerogatives to which the popes now pretend, is the power of ſummoning general

* Anecdotes, p. 187.

councils, and of preſiding in them. But all the general councils within the five firſt centuries were ſummoned by the emperors. Leo I. joined with many other biſhops in requeſting the emperor Theodoſius to ſummon a council in Italy, but he refuſed, becauſe he had before appointed one in Epheſus. Nor did the popes, or their legates, preſide in general councils in early times; but various other biſhops preſided in them; and in the firſt general council, viz. that of Nice, Conſtantine himſelf was the principal moderator or director. Speaking to the biſhops upon that occaſion, he ſaid, "Ye are biſhops of things within the "church, but I am biſhop as to externals."

SECTION II.

The Hiſtory of the Papal Power from the Time of Charlemaigne to the Reformation.

THE firſt thing that I ſhall notice in this period, is the changes that were made from time to time with reſpect to the election of the popes, and the confirmation of them in their office. It is certain that for many centuries the popes

popes could not be conſecrated till their election had been approved of by the emperors; and in general a ſum of money had been given at the ſame time, till it was remitted, as I have obſerved, by Conſtantine Pogonatus. The ſame right of confirming the popes was exerciſed by the Goths, by Charlemaigne, and his ſucceſſors the emperors of Germany. But in 847, Leo IV. was choſen pope without the conſent of the emperor, the Romans being then preſſed by the Saracens; and finding a neceſſity of having a head. However they deferred the conſecration from April to June, waiting for the conſent of the emperor, and they made an apology for it afterwards.

At length Charles the Bald, having obtained the imperial dignity by the good offices of the popes, diſcharged them from the obligation of waiting for the conſent of the emperor to their election. But from the time of Eugenius III. who was raiſed to the pontificate in 854, the election of the popes was conducted without the leaſt regard to law, order, or even decency, and was generally attended with civil tumults and diſſentions, till the reign of Otho the Great, who put a ſtop to thoſe diſorderly proceedings, and prohibited the election of popes without the previous knowledge and conſent of the emperor; and this order was enforced to the concluſion of the ninth century. Gregory VII. however, taking advantage of the diviſions of the empire, emancipated

the ſee of Rome from this mark of its ſubjection to the empire *.

In early times, the biſhops of Rome, like thoſe of other cities, were choſen by the people, as well as the clergy. The firſt conſiderable innovation that was made in this reſpect at Rome, was at a council held in 1059, under Nicholas II. when it was ordered that, upon the deceaſe of a pope, the cardinal biſhops ſhould firſt conſider of a proper perſon to ſucceed; that they ſhould then conſult with their cardinal clergy, and then that the reſt of the clergy, and alſo the people ſhould give their conſent†. But Alexander III. in the middle of the twelfth century, eſtabliſhed the ſole right of election in the college of cardinals.

After this time the term *cardinal* was confined to the ſeven biſhops within the territory and city of Rome, who had been uſed to conſecrate the Roman pontiff, and to the preſbyters of the twenty-eight Roman pariſhes, or principal churches. To appeaſe the tumults that were made by others of the clergy, who were by this regulation excluded from the privilege of voting, this Alexander III. conferred the dignity of cardinals upon ſeveral more of the ſuperior clergy; and to pacify the inferior clergy, he, or ſome of his ſucceſſors, for it is uncertain, made the chief

* Moſheim, vol. ii. p. 121, 208, 280. † Fleury.

of

of them *cardinal deacons*, giving them alſo votes in the election. Lucius III. was the firſt pope that was choſen by cardinals only *. The particular rules that are now obſerved in the election of a pope were ſettled in 1178, and may be ſeen in the *Hiſtoire des Papes*, vol. iii. p. 88.

I ſhall juſt add to this article, that the almoſt univerſal cuſtom of the popes changing their names upon their election, began with Bocco di Porco, in 884, who changed his name to Sergius, his original name, ſignifying *Hog's Snout*, being thought unſuitable to his dignity.

It is not eaſy to ſay whether the ſpiritual or the temporal power of the popes was the more extravagant, but the temporal power preceded the ſpiritual, and no doubt laid the foundation for it. though other pretences were alleged. But there is no great difficulty in making merely oſtenſible pretences to be received, when there is ſufficient power to enforce them; and it was preſently after the commencement of this period, that the popes acquired that amazing acceſſion of property and power, which placed them on a level with other princes of Europe.

The firſt large acceſſion was made from the ſpoils of the Lombards in Italy, with whom Ste-

* Moſheim, vol. ii. p. 271.

phen II. had quarrelled, and againſt whom he undertook a journey to France, to ſolicit the aid of Pepin king of France, who promiſed that if he ſhould drive out the Lombards, he would give the popes the exarchate of Ravenna, and the Pentapolis. From their acquiſition of the latter, which was made in 774, the popes ceaſed to date their letters by the reigns of the emperors *. This acquiſition was evidently made by ſuch policy as is employed by ſecular princes to increaſe their dominions. But Stephen, like other artful princes, was not at a loſs for ſome colour of right, for he pretended that this territory belonged to him, as being the ſpoil of an heretical prince. For the Lombards, as well as the Goths, were Arians.

When Charlemaigne afterwards put an entire end to the empire of the Lombards in Italy, the whole of the exarchate, the capital of which was Ravenna, was given to the popes. He was probably induced to make this large grant of land to the church of Rome, by a pretence, which was about this time made, that Conſtantine the great had made a ſimilar grant of territory to the ſame church; though it is now univerſally agreed that this donation of Conſtantine was a forgery. Notwithſtanding theſe large grants, both Pepin and Charlemaigne reſerved to themſelves the ſo-

* Anecdotes, p. 255, 257.

vereignty

vereignty of all theſe lands in Italy. But this was afterwards ſurrendered to the popes by Lothair I *.

The laſt acquiſition the popes made was that of the ſovereignty of Rome, the inhabitants of which had always acknowledged the emperor as their ſovereign. But in 1198 the prefect of Rome received his office from the pope, and not from the emperor †. From this times the popes have been as properly independent as any ſovereign princes in Europe.

From the ninth to the thirteenth century, the wealth or revenues of the pope did not receive any conſiderable addition; but from this time they were vaſtly increaſed, eſpecially under Innocent III. and Nicholas III. partly by the events of war, and partly by the munificence of kings and emperors. Innocent was no ſooner ſeated in the papal chair, than, beſides reducing to his ſubjection the prefect of Rome, as mentioned above, he ſeized upon Ancona, Spoleto, Aſſiſi, and ſeveral other cities, which he pretended had been unjuſtly alienated from the ſee of Rome. Nicholas IV. followed the example of Innocent, and in 1278 he refuſed to crown Rodolph I. before he had confirmed, by a ſolemn treaty, all the pretenſions of the Roman ſee; and immediately upon that he ſeized

* Anecdotes, p. 320, 338. † Hiſt. des Papes, vol. iii. p. 120.

ſeveral cities and territories in Italy which had formerly been annexed to the imperial crown, particularly Romagna and Bologna. It was under theſe two popes that the ſee of Rome arrived at its higheſt degree of grandeur and opulence *.

Like other politic princes, the popes gained theſe advantages chiefly in conſequence of diviſions in the families of the temporal powers. The diviſions between the kings of France of the ſecond race were more particularly the means of advancing the power of the popes to its greateſt height. Thoſe who were condemned in France had recourſe to the holy ſee, and always found protection there. In like manner the popes availed themſelves of the conteſt between the emperors Lewis and Charles, about the middle of the fourteenth century; in conſequence of which the imperial power was quite loſt in Italy, the popes ſeizing upon ſome of the towns, and others ſetting up for themſelves.

The cruſades contributed very much to complete the power of the popes, as temporal princes, and brought buſineſs enough of a civil nature upon their hands. For they had not only many diſpenſations to grant to thoſe who could not go to thoſe wars, but they made themſelves judges

* Moſheim, vol. ii. p. 32, 33.

of

of all the differences among thoſe princes that went thither *.

But the ambition of the popes was far from being ſatisfied with the acquiſition of an independent ſovereignty. They ſoon began to extend their claims to other territories, and even to the empire itſelf. For having been accuſtomed to crown the emperors, they took advantage from that circumſtance, together with that of the diviſions in the empire, to arrogate to themſelves the power of deciding who ſhould be the emperor; and one or other of the candidates was but too ready to yield to the demands of the poge, in order to ſecure his intereſt. In theſe circumſtances John VIII. proclaimed Charles the Bald emperor in 876, in an aſſembly of the Italian princes at Pavia; and in the ſame manner were his two ſucceſſors choſen. From this nomination of Charles the Bald, Sigonius ſays that the *empire* has been a fief of the holy ſee †.

After this, viz. in the eleventh century, the popes aſſumed the character of lords of the univerſe, and arbiters of kingdoms and empires. Before Leo IX. no pope claimed this unbounded authority of transferring territories and provinces from their lawful owners. But this pontiff granted to the Normans, who were ſettled in Italy, the

* Fleury's ſixth Diſcourſe, p. 20. † Sueur, A. D. 875.

lands

lands and territories which they had already uſurped, or which they ſhould be able to conquer from the Greeks or Saracens *.

Gregory VII. followed the new maxims, and carried them farther, openly pretending that, as pope, he had a right to depoſe ſovereigns who rebelled againſt the church. This he founded principally upon the power of excommunication. An excommunicated perſon, he ſaid, muſt, according to the rules of the apoſtles, be avoided by every body. A prince, therefore, who is excommunicated, muſt be abandoned by all the world, even by his own ſubjects. This pope never made any formal deciſion of this kind, nor had he the countenance of any council, but he acted upon the maxim.

On the other hand, the defenders of the princes took it ſo much for granted, that an excommunicated perſon was ſubject to all the above-mentioned inconveniences, that they contented themſelves with ſaying, that a prince ought not to be excommunicated; which, ſays Fleury, was giving the popes a great advantage in the argument. This pope likewiſe urged that, ſince the clergy have a right to decide concerning things ſpiritual, they have, *a fortiori*, a right to decide concerning things temporal. The leaſt exorciſt, he

* Moſheim, vol. ii. p. 260.

ſaid,

ſaid, is above an emperor, ſince he commands dæmons; royalty is the work of the devil, being the effect of human pride; whereas the prieſthood is the work of God *.

Some of the pretenſions of this great pontiff were ſo very abſurd, that one would think they muſt have refuted themſelves by the events. In his difference with the emperor of Germany, he ſays, "We bind him by an apoſtolical authority, "not only with reſpect to the ſoul, but to the "body. We take from him all proſperity in this "life, and victory from his arms †."

Later popes continued the ſame arrogant claims, and the neceſſity of the times too often induced princes to ſubmit to them, though they had ſometimes the ſpirit to reſiſt. In 1225, Honorius III. applied to the popes the words of Jeremiah i. 20. *I have ſet thee over the people, and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to deſtroy, &c* ‡. In the fourteenth century Boniface VIII. in a quarrel with Philip the Fair king of France, aſſerted that Jeſus Chriſt had granted a two-fold power to the church, a ſpiritual and a temporal ſword; that he had ſubjected the whole human race to the Roman pontiff, and that whoever dared to diſbelieve this doctrine were to be deemed

* Fleury, vol. xiii. p. 48. † Ib. A. D. 1078.
‡ Hiſtoire des Papes, vol. iii. p. 164.

heretics,

heretics, and ſtood excluded from all poſſibility of ſalvation. The king being ſtill refractory, the pope excommunicated him, but he appealed to a general council, and ſent a party of men to bring the pope by force before him. In conſequence of this he was apprehended at Anagni, but the inhabitants reſcued him. He died, however, preſently afterwards, of rage and anguiſh. His ſucceſſor Benedict XI. of his own accord, withdrew the excommunication; but by this time the papal power had begun to decline*.

When we conſider the effects of excommunication in thoſe dark ages, and the acknowledged power of the popes to direct that dreadful weapon, and alſo to ſuſpend the exerciſe of all eccleſiaſtical functions, than which nothing could impreſs the minds of men in thoſe times with more terror and conſternation (as they imagined their everlaſting happineſs depended on thoſe functions) we cannot wonder either at the arrogance, or the ſucceſs of the popes. Robert king of France, not complying with the pope's decree reſpecting the diſſolution of his marriage, the pope, for the firſt time, laid the whole kingdom under this interdict, forbidding all divine ſervice, the uſe of the ſacraments to the living, and of burial to the dead. The people terrified by this order, yielded ſuch implicit obedience, that even the king's own

* Moſheim, vol. iii. p. 152.

domeſtics

domeſtics abandoned him, except two or three, and thoſe threw to the dogs every thing that came from his table. No perſon even dared to eat out of any veſſel which he had touched. The king, being reduced to this diſmal ſtate, was forced to yield, and cancel his marriage*.

The degree to which the popes ſometimes carried their rage was truly dreadful. John XXIII. not only excommunicated Ladiſlas, king of Bohemia, but publiſhed a cruſade againſt him; inviting all chriſtian princes to make war upon him, and ſeize his dominions. His bull upon this occaſion contained an order to all patriarchs, biſhops, archbiſhops and prelates, to publiſh every Sunday and feſtival day, by the ſound of a bell, and with candles lighted, and then extinguiſhed by throwing them upon the ground, that king Ladiſlas was "excommunicated, perjured, a ſchiſmatic, a blaſphemer, a heretic, a relapſe, a favourer of heretics, a traitor, and an enemy of the pope and of the church." He alſo excommunicated all his adherents and favourers, till by a return to their duty they ſhould receive abſolution; and ordered that whoſoever ſhould undertake to bury Ladiſlas, or any of his partiſans, ſhould be excommunicated, and not be abſolved but by digging up the body with their own hands, and carrying it out of the place of

* Sueur A. D. 998.

chriſtian

chriſtian burial; and that they places on which they ſhould lie ſhould be prophane for ever *.

So fully was this temporal power of the popes eſtabliſhed, that they alone were thought to have the right of diſpoſing of kingdoms; and they were as regularly applied to for that purpoſe, as the temporal courts for titles of nobility, &c. In 1179, Alexander III. conferred the title of *king*, with the enſigns of royalty, upon Alphonſo duke of Portugal, who under the pontificate of Lucius II. had rendered his province tributary to the Roman ſee †. Innocent III. gave a king to the Armenians in Aſia, and in 1204 he made Primiſlas duke of Bohemia king of that country, and Peter II. king of Arragon. The title of king of Ireland was alſo a grant of the pope to our king Henry II. and when the Portugueſe and the Spaniards were purſuing their diſcoveries and conqueſts, the one to the Eaſt, and the other to the Weſt, the popes drew the line that was to regulate all their future claims to dominion. Theſe acts of univerſal deſpotiſm were beheld with aſtoniſhment, but with ſilent and paſſive obedience, by all the temporal powers of Europe.

It was in the eleventh century that the power of the popes may be ſaid to have been at its height. They then received the pompous titles

* Hiſt. des Papes, vol. iv. p. 151. † Moſheim, vol. ii. p. 403

of

of the *maſters of the world*, and of *univerſal fathers*. They preſided every where in the councils by their legates. They decided in all controverſies concerning religion, or church diſcipline; and they maintained the pretended rights of the church againſt the uſurpations of kings and princes. But this was not done without oppoſition both from the biſhops, and from the temporal powers*.

In order to preſerve this amazing power, it was neceſſary to keep the clergy as dependent as poſſible upon themſelves, and as little attached to their temporal ſovereign. Gregory VII. never forbad the clergy to take an oath of allegiance to their reſpective ſovereigns; but this was done by Urban II. who made an order for that purpoſe at the council of Clermont. To complete the temporal character of the popes, I ſhall in the laſt place obſerve, that it was common in the twelfth century to ſee them at the head of armies.

The inſolence with which the popes have acted in the height of their power is hardly credible. Gregory VII. obliged the emperor Henry IV. whom he had excommunicated, and who applied for abſolution, to wait three days before he would admit him; though both the emperor, the empreſs, and their child, waited barefoot in the depth of winter. On the fourth day he was admitted, and as a token of his repentance, he re-

* Moſheim, vol. ii. p. 259.

ſigned

ſigned his crown into the hands of the pope, and confeſſed himſelf unworthy of the empire, if ever he ſhould oppoſe his will for the future: and he was not abſolved without very mortifying conditions*.

Adrian IV. inſulted the emperor Barbaroſſa, about the middle of the twelfth century, for holding him the left ſtirrup inſtead of the right, and at length the emperor was compelled to hold the other ſtirrup. The next pope, Alexander III. trod upon the neck of the ſame emperor, uſing at the ſame time this expreſſion of the pſalmiſt, *Thou ſhalt walk upon the lion and the adder; the young lion and the dragon ſhalt thou trample under foot.* Pſ. xci. 13.

When Henry VI. the next emperor, was crowned by Celeſtine III. he kneeled before him as he ſat in his pontifical chair, and was obliged to take the crown from his feet; and when the pope had kicked it off again, to ſhew his power to depoſe him, the cardinals were, at length, permitted to crown the emperor once more. This was done to ſhew that the imperial crown depended entirely upon the pope†.

Our own country has not been leſs diſgraced by papal inſolence. One of the braveſt of our haughty Norman princes, Henry II. could not ſatisfy the pope with reſpect to the murder of the

* Fleury, A. D. 1077. † Hiſt. des Papes, vol. iii. p. 112.

factions

factious and turbulent prelate Thomas a Becket (of which, however, he was not guilty) till he walked barefoot to his tomb, and was whipped by the monks at Canterbury. King John was excommunicated, depoſed, and made to receive his crown again, at the hands of the pope's legate, and to acknowledge himſelf a vaſſal of the ſee of Rome.

In order to evade the tyranny of the popes, it was cuſtomary, when the times would bear it, not to diſpute their power directly, but to prevent the publication of their bulls. Thus when Paul V. laid the ſtate of Venice under an interdict, they baniſhed thoſe of the clergy who complied with the order, and at length the popes were glad to get Henry IV. of France to make their peace with the Venetians, who threatened to break off from their communion*.

The temporal power of the popes, as I have obſerved before, was more antient than the notion of their *infallibility*. This was not known in the times of Pepin or Charlemaigne; and though councils were not then deemed infallible, the authority of the pope was held to be ſubordinate to that. That councils are infallible was not pretended till the popes had been deemed to be ſo; the councils attributing to themſelves what they had taken from the popes †.

* Moſheim, vol. iv. p. 319. † Baſnage, vol. iii. p. 597.

With reſpect to ſpiritual power in general, the popes derived much advantage from the ideas of the northern nations in their ſtate of Paganiſm. For they conſidered the biſhop of Rome in the ſame light in which they had before done their *archdruid*, and transferred to him that boundleſs reverence with which they had been uſed to regard the other. Hence the force of the papal excommunications, which, as under the druids, deprived a perſon of all the common rights of humanity*.

However, beſides the conſtant oppoſition of the Greek church, the overbearing authority of the ſee of Rome was not always ſubmitted to, even in the Weſt. It was particularly oppoſed by the church of Milan, which in the former period had been a metropolitan church with a juriſdiction independent of that of Rome. In 848 Angilbert, archbiſhop of Milan, ſeparated entirely from the church of Rome, and continued ſo nearly two hundred years. At length, however, the popes got the better of this, as of every other oppoſition.

It is in the ninth century that we find the firſt ſeeds of the doctrine of the popes infallibility. Then, at leaſt, the popes began to talk in a higher ſtrain than uſual on this ſubject; maintaining that they could not be judged by any perſon, and that

* Moſheim, vol. ii. p. 63.

their

their decrees, reſpecting manners, faith, or diſcipline, ought to be preferred even to thoſe of the councils themſelves if poſſible*. The argument on which this claim was reſted was the declaration of our Saviour to Peter, that he would give to him the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and becauſe he likewiſe ſaid that he had prayed for him, that his faith ſhould not fail, it was concluded that all the ſucceſſors of Peter at Rome would always maintain the right faith. Weak as this argument is, it was univerſally acquieſced in, in thoſe dark ages; and the popes acted upon it as upon a maxim that could not be diſputed. When the biſhop of Conſtantinople was depoſed in 861, the pope who had been written to on the occaſion, but not by way of appeal, ſaid in anſwer, "If they ought to be heard who "ſit in the chair of Moſes, how much more they "who ſit in the chair of St. Peter;" and he maintained that no biſhop of Conſtantinople ought to be depoſed without the conſent of the pope†.

The authority of the popes having gained ground, in the manner that has been deſcribed above, the opinion of their infallibility began to appear undiſguiſed and undiſputed about the middle of the eleventh century; Leo IX. declaring that the councils, and all the Fathers, had conſidered the church of Rome as the ſovereign

* Baſnage, vol. iii. p. 547. † Sueur, A. D. 868.

miſtreſs, to which the judgment of all other churches belonged, and which could be judged by none; and that all difficult queſtions ought to be decided by the ſucceſſors of St. Peter, becauſe that church had never erred from the faith, and would not to the end. This is the firſt pope who held this language with ſuch firmneſs. Gregory VII. who ſucceeded him, with more ſolemnity decreed in a council, that the church of Rome never had erred, and never will err, according to the teſtimony of the ſcriptures, on the ground above-mentioned. Bernard and Thomas Aquinas gave this doctrine the great weight of their authority, and they were followed by all the ſchoolmen.

Afterwards, however, ſeveral of the popes themſelves, when they had any particular point to gain, and when the decrees of former popes were quoted againſt them, made no difficulty of departing from this doctrine. Thus John XXII. in his quarrel with the Fratricelli, who repreſented to him that three of his predeceſſors had been of their opinion, anſwered that "what had "been ill determined by one pope and one council "might be corrected by another, better informed "concerning the truth." But, except in theſe occaſional deviations, the popes aſſerted their infallibility, and it was generally acquieſced in till the time of the great ſchiſm; when almoſt all the chriſtian world, ſeeing the popes ſacrifice every thing to

to their own ambition, dropped the high opinion which they had before entertained of them. Nor was it poſſible to put an end to the ſchiſm, without ſetting up a council above the popes.

During the time that the doctrine of the pope's infallibility was generally received, the popes frequently ſpoke as if their decrees had been dictated by immediate inſpiration. Thus pope John VIII. ſays, that he had found that ſuch a thing was the council of God, becauſe that of a long time it had been revealed, by celeſtial inſpiration, to his predeceſſor Nicholas*.

Such firm hold had the notion of the infallibility of the popes on the minds of men, that ſome of the greateſt men in the chriſtian world, and even ſince the reformation were not able to ſhake it off. Father Paul, the great advocate of the ſtate of Venice againſt the uſurpation of the popes, admitted that they ought to be obeyed in all matters of doctrine, and what related to the adminiſtration of the ſacraments†. It is poſſible, however, that he might make this conceſſion by way of argument, while he was diſputing againſt their power in things of a temporal nature. But this was not the caſe with the famous Fenelon, archbiſhop of Cambray, who, when his book was condemned by the pope, publicly declared his entire acquieſcence in the decree. He even read it

* Sueur A. D. 875. † Baſnage, vol. iii. p. 549.

himſelf from his own pulpit, and exhorted the people to reſpect and obey it*.

Originally, as I have frequently obſerved, all biſhops, and the popes themſelves, were choſen by the people. Afterwards the metropolitans interfered and then the princes reſerved to themſelves the right of approbation, and thus all abbots and biſhops were choſen till the time of Henry III. of Germany†. But afterwards the popes claimed the right of nomination to all the greater livings; having made the firſt attempts of this kind in France, where they took advantage of the weakneſs of that monarchy. They then began to give out, that the biſhops of Rome were appointed by Jeſus Chriſt to be the ſupreme legiſlators of the univerſal church, and that all other biſhops derived their authority from them. Oppoſition was made to theſe claims, but it was ineffectual; and from the time of Lewis the Meek, European princes in general ſuffered themſelves to be diveſted of all authority in religious matters.

To gain this point, many memorials, and acts of former times, where forged in this age, and eſpecially the famous *decretal epiſtles*, ſaid to have been written by the primitive biſhops of Rome. They are generally fathered upon Iſidore, biſhop of Seville, who lived in the ſixth century‡.

* Moſheim, vol. iv. p. 393. † Simon on Church Revenues, p. 61.
‡ Moſheim, vol. ii. p. 126.

The

The popes made ſo artful an uſe of the weakneſs of the French monarchy, that a council held at Rheims in 991, in which the authority of the pope had been diſputed, is called *the laſt ſighs of the liberties of the Gallic church*, the biſhops of France after this allowing the popes a right to depoſe them. All the world, ſays M. de Marca, was obliged to ſubmit to this new opinion, and France was at length forced to yield at the beginning of the third race of their kings. The popes laid all the biſhops who had aſſiſted at this council under an interdict and would not take it off till every thing was reſtored as before the council*.

But it was in the eleventh century that the great diſpute aroſe between the popes and the emperor of Germany, about the right of *Inveſtiture*. This, conſiſted, originally, in the prince, or chief, putting a clergyman into the poſſeſſion of any eſtate or fief; and was done by the delivery of a bough, or in ſuch other manner as that in which laymen had been uſually inveſted by the ſame perſons. But becauſe, upon the death of any incumbent, the prieſts uſed to deliver the *ring* and the *croſier* of the deceaſed biſhop (by which the election of a new biſhop had been uſed to be irrecoverably confirmed) to ſome perſon of their own chuſing, before the vacancy was notified to the prince, an order was given that

* Sueur, A. D. 991.

thoſe enſigns of ſpiritual power ſhould be tranſmitted to the prince immediately upon the death of any biſhop, and then he delivered them to whom he pleaſed; after which the ſame enſigns were again ſolemnly delivered by the metropolitan biſhop. After much contention, and much war and bloodſhed upon the occaſion, it was compromiſed, by the popes conſenting that the emperor ſhould inveſt by the delivery of a ſcepter, and not of a ring or croſier, which were enſigns of a ſpiritual authority *. The principal actor in this great ſcene was Gregory VII. who, in a council at Lateran, decided that if any biſhop received inveſtiture from a layman, both he and the layman ſhould be excommunicated.

In 1199 the popes pretended to have a right over all benefices, and that all tranſlations from one ſee to another were the eſpecial privilege of the ſee of Rome †. This right, however, was not fully aſſerted before it was done by Innocent III. in the thirteenth century, who aſſumed to himſelf, as pope, the power of diſpoſing of all offices in the church, whether higher or lower, and of creating biſhops, abbots, and canons, at pleaſure. And though the popes had formerly been ſtrenuous advocates for the free choice of biſhops againſt the encroachments of the emperors, this

* Moſheim, vol. ii. p. 289.

† Hiſtoire des Papes, vol. iii. p. 126.

pope,

pope, and many of his ſucceſſors, overturned all thoſe laws of election; reſerving to themſelves the revenues of the richeſt benefices, conferring vacant places upon their clients and creatures, and often depoſing biſhops who had been duly elected, and ſubſtituting others with a high hand in their room. The biſhops, however, oppoſed theſe encroachments, but generally to little purpoſe.

Lewis IX. of France ſecured the rights of the Gallican church in this reſpect by a famous edict, known by the name of the *Pragmatic ſanction.* This, however, did not make the popes renounce their pretenſions, and their legates acted with all the inſolence and tyranny of their maſters in the countries into which they were ſent; inſomuch that Alexander IV. in 1256, made a ſevere law againſt their frauds and avarice. But it was eaſily evaded by the credit of their friends at the court of Rome. At laſt Leo X. engaged Francis I. to aboliſh this Pragmatic ſanction, and to ſubſtitute another body of laws, more favourable to the popes, called the *Concordate*; but this was received with the greateſt reluctance and indignation *.

Another part of the ſpiritual power claimed by the popes is that of granting diſpenſations to do what would otherwiſe be unlawful; and from merely relaxing the ſeverity of diſcipline, or re-

* Moſheim, vol. iii, p. 31, 32, 290.

mitting

mitting the penances that had been enjoined for ſin, (which, in time, made it to be imagined that they had the power of forgiving ſin itſelf *after the commiſſion*) they eaſily paſſed to the idea of their having a power to forgive it, and, which was the ſame thing, of their making it to be no ſin, *before the commiſſion.*

It was the wants and the avarice of the popes that firſt led them to grant theſe indulgences. The popes, when they were ſettled at Avignon, not being able to draw ſo much as they had uſed to do from Italy, had recourſe to new methods of getting wealth. They not only ſold indulgences more frequently than formerly, but diſpoſed publicly of ſcandalous licences, of all ſorts, at an exceſſive price. John XXII. was particularly active in promoting this abominable traffic. He enlarged the taxes and rules of the apoſtolical chamber, and made them more profitable, though he was not the inventor of them.

The height to which the popes, and their advocates, carried their pretenſions in this way is indeed aſtoniſhing. Innocent III. about 1198, decreed that out of the plenitude of the papal power, the pope could "of right, diſpenſe be-"yond right;" and according to other decrees the popes claimed the power of diſpenſing even againſt the apoſtles, and the apoſtolical canons. Gratian, the famous canon lawyer, aſſerted that all

all men, are to be judged by the pope, but the pope himſelf by no man. And cardinal Zabar ſays that the pope may do what he pleaſes, even things unlawful, and that he is thereby more than God *.

There are too many inſtances in hiſtory of the popes reducing theſe pretenſions into practice, by actually granting diſpenſations to do things morally evil, eſpecially to releaſe perſons from the obligation of oaths. In 1042, Caſimir king of Poland having retired to a monaſtery, deputies were ſent to the pope, and he abſolved him from his vows, and permitted him to reſume the government of his kingdom †. Celeſtine II. having required Henry king of England to re-eſtabliſh Dunſtan in the archbiſhopric of York, and he ſaying that he had ſwore he never would do it as long as he lived, the pope anſwered, "I am pope, "if you will do what I require, I will abſolve "you of that oath." The king, however, declined it ‡. Henry II. of England, having ſworn to fulfill his father's will, obtained an abſolution from the pope, and thereupon deprived his brother of his eſtates, and reduced him to a penſion. At the council of Conſtance John XXIII. drew from many cardinals what he wanted to know of them, by releaſing them from the oath of ſe-

* Hiſtory of Popery, vol. i. p. 10. † Fleury.
‡ Hiſtoire des Papes, vol. ii. p. 609.

crecy

crecy which they had taken *. The popes have always granted diſpenſations to marry within the prohibited degrees of conſanguinity. Martin V. is ſaid to have given leave to a man to marry his own ſiſter.

Another power in ſpiritual matters, which has been claimed by the popes, is that of *canonization*, or the declaring what perſons ſhould be deemed *ſaints*, and the objects of worſhip. In the council at Lateran, in 1179, under Alexander III. canonization was ranked among "the greater and "more important cauſes, the cognizance of which "belonged to the Roman pontiff alone †."

Another prerogative claimed, and long exerciſed by the popes, and yet moſt clearly againſt all antient cuſtom, was that of calling and preſiding in all councils; whereas originally, as I have obſerved, it was the buſineſs of the metropolitan of each diſtrict, and afterwards they were called by the temporal princes, firſt the emperor of Conſtantinople, and then other princes in their ſeveral ſtates. In Germany it had always been the cuſtom for the metropolitans to preſide in their councils; but in the year 1074 the pope claimed a right of ſending his legate to preſide in them ‡. And, in time, this claim, though the novelty of it was

* Hiſtoire des Papes, vol. iv. p. 40.

† Moſheim, vol. ii. p. 403. ‡ Fleury.

eaſily

eaſily proved, came to be univerſally acquieſced in, and nothing but the factions of the popes themſelves could ever have led the world to think or act otherwiſe. But after the great ſchiſm in the popedom, in which there were a long time two popes, and ſometimes three, there was an abſolute neceſſity of calling a council, and giving it a power of cenſuring, degrading, and making popes.

A new power now being eſtabliſhed in the world, viz. that of the popes and the biſhops, a power governed by maxims unknown to the world before, a new *ſyſtem of laws* was of courſe introduced by it. This obtained the name of *canon law*, conſiſting originally of the decrees of general councils and ſynods, and then of the conſtitutions of popes, and deciſions made by the court of Rome. In time theſe laws were collected, and reduced to a ſyſtem, and became the object of ſtudy and practice to a new ſet of lawyers, as the Roman civil law had been before.

The firſt collection of eccleſiaſtical canons was publiſhed towards the end of the fourth century, by Stephen of Epheſus, and it was received with univerſal applauſe. The church of Rome made uſe of this collection till that of Dionyſius Exiguus appeared, in the ſixth century. Theſe canons had no ſanctions of a temporal nature, and therefore the councils generally applied to the emperors

perors who had aſſembled them, to compel the obſervance of their decrees *.

In the ſeventh century, the collection of canons by Iſidore of Seville was publiſhed, compoſed of the councils held in Greece, Africa, France, and Spain, and alſo of the decretal letters of the popes, to the time of Zacharias who died in 752 †. This being a dark and ignorant age, all the letters of the popes, for the firſt four centuries were forged, and yet the forgery was for many centuries undiſcovered. Theſe decretal letters had no other object than to extend the power of the popes, and the dignity of the biſhops ‡. The difficulty of judging biſhops, Fleury ſays, was increaſed by theſe decretals; the power of judging them being thereby given to the popes, ſo that appeals to Rome became very frequent §.

Gratian, who made a collection of canons in the twelfth century, went beyond the forged decretals in two important articles, viz. the authority of the popes, and the immunities of the clergy. For he maintained that the popes are not bound by the canons, and that the clergy cannot be tried by the laity in any caſes. The conſtitutions of the popes after this compilation of Gratian turned upon the maxims contained in it; and

* Anecdotes, p. 105, 107. † Ib. p. 293.
‡ Sueur, A. D. 838. § Seventh Diſcourſe, p. 13.

yet

yet as the power of the popes increaſed they kicked away the ſcaffold, by which they had been aſſiſted in climbing to this height of power. For Father Simon ſays that the decrees of Gratian are not valued at Rome, nor the books of decretals, but ſo far as they ſuit their purpoſe, the great principle of the court of Rome being that the pope is above all law, which was indeed the great object of Gratian *.

In this country the biſhops were allowed to have a ſeparate juriſdiction, according to the canon law, after the Norman conqueſt, and this continued till it was abridged under Henry VIII †. Indeed the canon law has never been directly aboliſhed in England, and though a correction was propoſed to be made of it, the ſcheme was never carried into execution. But it was provided in 1534, that till ſuch a correction ſhould be made all the canons that were then received ſhould remain in force, except ſuch as were contrary to the laws and cuſtoms of the realm, or that were to the hurt of the king's prerogative. And it is perhaps better that the canon law ſhould remain ſubject to this reſtraint, than that any new ſyſtem of the ſame kind ſhould be enacted without any controul ‡. Theſe remains, however, of the canon law have been gradually going into diſuſe, and the

* On Church Revenues, p. 88. † Hiſt. of Popery, vol. iii. p. 70.
‡ Neal's Hiſtory, vol. i. p. 11.

whole

whole practice of the *ſpiritual courts*, in which it is continued, is now held in univerſal abhorrence and contempt.

The pride and exterior marks of ſplendour aſſumed by the popes, have ſufficiently correſponded to the power which they acquired; and the flatteries which they have received from their partizans have ſometimes been in the higheſt degree abominable and blaſphemous.

While the imperial power continued, no mark of reſpect was paid to the popes that was not paid to other biſhops, archbiſhops, or patriarchs. But after they obtained ſovereign power, they obtained likewiſe the ſame titles, and the ſame marks of reverence and reſpect which had been claimed by other princes; and ſeveral of theſe ought to have been appropriated to divinity. The title of *holineſs* was often given by one biſhop to another, but it was appropriated to the biſhop of Rome about the year 1000*. The ceremony of the *adoration* of the pope, after his election, was borrowed from Paganiſm. This was always done to the Roman Pontifex Maximus, and it is done by the cardinals to the pope, ſeated upon the altar for that purpoſe. The cuſtoms of kiſſing the feet, and being carried on men's ſhoulders, were alſo borrowed from the Romans or the northern

* Sueur, A. D. 366.

nations.

nations. Diocleſian ordered, by a public edict, that all perſons ſhould proſtrate themſelves before him, and kiſs his feet; and for this purpoſe he had a ſhoe ornamented with gold and precious ſtones *. It was Gregory VII. who ordered in council that even princes ſhould kiſs the feet of the pope only†. But Valentine is ſaid to have been the firſt pope whoſe feet were kiſſed after conſecration by the cardinals and other perſons preſent, in 827.

The popes, to ſhew their ſuperiority to other ſovereigns, have aſſumed a *triple crown*. At firſt they wore only a bonnet, a little higher than uſual, very much like the Phrygian mitres, which were uſed by the prieſts of Cybele; but Clovis king of France having ſent to the church of St. John of Lateran a crown of gold, with which he had been preſented by Anaſtaſius the emperor of Conſtantinople, pope Hormiſdas put it on his tiara. Afterwards Boniface VIII. in his quarrels with Philip the Fair, to ſhew that things temporal ought to be ſubject to things ſpiritual, as a mark of this double authority uſed two crowns inſtead of one, and to them John XXII. added a third, but with what particular view is not ſaid ‡.

The ſtile that has ſometimes been aſſumed by the popes, and made uſe of in addreſſes to ſome

* Hiſt. of Popery, vol. iii. p. 340, &c. † Sueur, A. D. 711.
‡ Hiſtoire des Papes, vol. iii. p. 425.

of them, without their declining it, is truly blaſphemous. Martin IV. having excommunicated the people of Sicily, would not abſolve them till their ambaſſador, being proſtrate on the earth, entreated it, ſaying, *O lamb of God, who takeſt away the ſins of the world, grant us thy peace**. The Fathers of the council of Lateran ſaid to pope Leo X. "We reſpect your divine majeſty, "you are the huſband of the church, the prince "of the apoſtles, the prince and king of all the "univerſe." They entreated alſo that he would not let them loſe the ſalvation and the life which he had given them. Adding, "Thou art the paſtor, "and the phyſician, thou art a God;" and declared that he had *all power in heaven and in earth* †. The canoniſts often gave the popes the title of *Dominus Deus noſter*, which, indeed, had been aſſumed by Domitian. Paul V. cauſed his picture to be affixed to ſeveral books, with this inſcription, *Paulo V, vice Deo*; and Sixtus IV. ſuffered a triumphal arch to be erected to his honour, with this inſcription:

Orâclo vocis mundi moderaris habenas,
Et merito in terris diceris eſſe Deus ‡.

A circumſtance which ſhews the ſpirit of the papacy in a particularly ſtrong light, is that Gregory VII. the moſt ambitious of all the popes,

* Hiſt. of Popery, vol. iii. p. 441. † Baſnage, vol. iii. p. 556.
‡ Hiſtory of Popery, vol. i. p. 94.

and

and who contributed more than any other to increaſe the power and pride of the popedom, was canonized, and a particular office, or form of prayer, was compoſed to his honour. This was introduced by Alexander VII. and was read in the churches of Rome and other parts of Europe; and whatever in his life ought to make his memory odious, is recited in this office as an heroic action. It was alſo authorized by Benedict XIII. But all Europe were offended at it*.

There is no giving one character of a ſet of men ſo numerous and ſo various as the popes have been; but, in general, ſince they have become ſovereign princes, they have had all the follies and vices of other ſovereign princes, and have ſpent their revenues in the ſame manner; more eſpecially (as their power was ſhort, and the office not hereditary) in enriching their families and dependants. At one period they were, for many ſucceſſions, monſters of wickedneſs; uſing every art, and making no ſcruple even of murder, to gain their ends. A man more abandoned to vice of the moſt atrocious kinds than Alexander VI. was perhaps never known, and Leo X. the great patron of learning, was exceedingly debauched, and probably an atheiſt.

It muſt be acknowledged, however, that many of the popes have been men who would have

* Hiſtoire des Papes, vol. ii. p. 491. vol. v. p. 597.

adorned any ſtation in life; being, in the worſt times, patterns of virtue, and actuated by the beſt intentions in the world. But they never had power to reform their own courts, or to accompliſh the other reformations they projected. However time, and the diminution of their power, has at length done a great deal towards it; and as the biſhops of Rome ſink to the level of other biſhops in the chriſtian church, they will probably acquire the virtues of their primitive anceſtors; but then they will be no longer what we now call *popes*.

It may excite our gratitude for the bleſſings of the reformation, to look back upon the ſtate of this country while it was ſubject to the papal power. The popes ſeem to have held this country in a ſtate of greater dependance than any other in Europe. To this the obligations that William the conqueror, and others of our princes were under to them, contributed not a little. All the rights and privileges of the Engliſh clergy were, in fact, in the hands of the pope, who taxed them at his pleaſure, and who had the abſolute nomination to all the richeſt benefices in the country. Theſe were in general filled with foreigners, eſpecially Italians, who never ſo much as ſaw their dioceſes or the country, but had their revenues remitted to them abroad; by which means the country was drained of immenſe ſums. The popes alſo diſpoſed even of the

the reverſions of the moſt lucrative places; ſo that neither the king, nor any other perſon in England, had any thing to diſpoſe of in the church.

This was ill brooked by ſeveral of our Norman princes and lords; but no redreſs was found for this evil till the reign of that ſpirited prince Edward III. who paſſed an act called the ſtatute of *proviſors*, by which all preſentations to livings within the kingdom were taken from the pope, and appointed to be in the king, or his ſubjects. But ſtill the popes had conſiderable power, as in the trials of titles to advowſons, and appeals to the court of Rome. And though, by the ſeventh of Richard II. the power of nomination to benefices without the king's licence was taken from the popes, they ſtill claimed the benefit of confirmation, of the tranſlation of biſhops, and of excommunication *.

The interference of the papal power received another check in the reign of Richard II. For whereas before that time the archbiſhops of Canterbury and York might, by virtue of bulls from Rome, aſſemble the clergy of their ſeveral provinces, at what time and place they thought fit, without leave from the crown, and all the canons and conſtitutions made in their ſynods were bind-

* Neal's Hiſtory, vol. i. p. 2.

ing without being ratified by the king; an act paſſed in the ſixteenth year of this reign called *premunire*, by which it was enacted, that if any of the clergy obtained any inſtrument from the court of Rome againſt the king or his crown, or if any perſon ſhould receive or execute them, they ſhould be out of the king's protection, their goods and chattels ſhould be forfeited, and their perſons impriſoned.

From this time no convocation of the clergy could be called without the king's writ, and they could conſult on ſuch matters only as he ſhould think proper to lay before them; but ſtill the canons were binding without the king's aſſent, till the act of ſupremacy under Henry VIII. This prince aſſumed the ſole right to the nomination and confirmation of biſhops; and to the great mortification of the clergy, he alſo took to himſelf the firſt fruits of all the benefices *.

* Neal's Hiſtory, vol. i. p. 10, &c.

APPENDIX I.

TO

PARTS X. AND XI.

The Hiſtory of COUNCILS.

TO the preceding hiſtory of the clergy in general, and of the biſhops and popes in particular, it may not be amiſs to add a ſeparate account of the *councils*, or aſſemblies of the biſhops and clergy, which make a great figure in the hiſtory of the chriſtian church. Theſe aſſumed a moſt undue authority, and have been one of the principal ſupports of the greateſt corruptions of chriſtian doctrines and diſcipline.

We find in the book of Acts, that when matters of conſiderable conſequence occurred, all the apoſtles, or as many of them as conveniently could, aſſembled to conſult about it, and their decrees were univerſally received in the chriſtian church. It does not appear, however, that what they reſolved on theſe occaſions was directed by any immediate inſpiration, for that would have

ſuperſeded all reaſoning and debates upon the ſubject, and conſequently all difference of opinion. Whereas they appear to have debated among themſelves, on ſome of theſe occaſions, with a conſiderable degree of warmth. And though they conclude their advice to the Gentile chriſtians about the obſervance of the Jewiſh ceremonies, with ſaying that *it ſeemed good to the Holy Ghoſt and to us*, they probably only meant, that they were fully perſuaded that the regulations which they preſcribed were proper in themſelves, and therefore agreeable to the mind and will of God; being conſcious to themſelves that they were under no improper bias. If they had been conſcious of any particular illumination at that time, they would probably have mentioned it. Such, however, was the reſpect in which the apoſtles were held, that even their advices had the force of decrees, and in general were implicitly conformed to.

When the apoſtles were dead, it was natural for the biſhops of particular churches to aſſemble on ſimilar occaſions; and though they could not have the authority of the apoſtles, that office becoming extinct with thoſe who were firſt appointed to it, yet as there was no higher authority in the church, had they contented themſelves with merely giving *advice*, and confined their deciſions to matters of diſcipline, they would hardly have been diſputed. But it has been pretended that

that *general councils*, conſiſting of biſhops aſſembled from all parts of the chriſtian world, ſucceed to all the power of the apoſtles, and have even abſolute authority in matters of faith. But an aſſembly of ever ſo many biſhops, being only an aſſembly of fallible men, can have no juſt claim to infallibility; nor indeed was this a thing that was pretended to in early times. Our Lord did, indeed, promiſe that when two or three of his diſciples were gathered together in his name, he would be in the midſt of them; but this promiſe, whatever might be meant by it, was not made to biſhops in particular, and might be claimed by two or three individuals, as well as by two or three hundred.

Beſides thoſe general councils, the decrees of which have been urged as of the greateſt authority, were in fact aſſemblies of factious men; in whoſe proceedings there was not even the appearance of their being influenced by the love of truth. For they determined juſt as the emperors, or the popes, who ſummoned them, were pleaſed to direct. Accordingly there are, as might be expected, many inſtances of the decrees of ſome councils being contrary to thoſe of others; which could not have been the caſe if they had been all guided by the ſpirit of truth.

Though Arianiſm was condemned by the council of Nice, it was eſtabliſhed at the council of

of Arminium, which was as much a general council as the other, and alſo in the councils of Seleucia and Syrmium. There is alſo a remarkable inſtance of the decrees of councils, in which the popes themſelves have preſided, contradicting one another, in thoſe of Chalcedon, and Conſtantinople, in 554. For the former abſolved and juſtified Theodorit of Cyr, and Ibas of Edeſſa, and received them into their body, as orthodox biſhops; whereas the council of Conſtantinople, which is ſtiled the fifth general council, and was approved by the pope, condemned them as damnable heretics *.

The council of Conſtantinople alſo decreed that images were not to be endured in chriſtian churches, whereas the ſecond council of Nice not only allowed them to be erected, but even to be worſhipped. In later times the Lateran council of Julius II. was called for no other purpoſe but to reſcind the decrees of the council of Piſa; and whereas the council of Baſil had decreed that a council of biſhops is above the popes, the Lateran council, under pope Leo, decreed that a pope is above a council.

Beſides, there never has been in fact any ſuch thing as a general council. Even the four firſt, which are the moſt boaſted of, had no biſhops

* Sueur, A. D. 524.

from

from ſeveral whole provinces in the chriſtian world. And the council of Trent, the authority of which the papiſts make ſo much account of, was perhaps the leaſt reſpectable of all the councils. The chief intention of the crowned heads who promoted this council, was to reform the abuſes in the court of Rome. But the pope himſelf, by his legates, preſiding in it, pronounced the proteſtants, who appealed to it, heretics before condemned by that council, and none were allowed to vote in it, but ſuch as had taken an oath to the pope and the church of Rome. There were hardly fifty biſhops preſent in it, none being ſent from ſeveral countries. Some that were there were only titular biſhops, created by the pope for that purpoſe; and ſome had Grecian titles, to make an appearance of the Greek church conſenting to it. It is alſo well known that nothing was decided in the council without the previous conſent of the court of Rome, and the decrees concluded with an expreſs ſalvo of all the authority of the apoſtolical ſee.

In fact, the papiſts themſelves have found a variety of methods of evading the force of general councils, whenever it has been convenient for them ſo to do; as if their deciſions depended upon a matter of fact, concerning which they were never pretended to be infallible; alſo if their proceedings were not in all reſpects regular, and if their decrees were not univerſally received,

as

as well as if they had not been approved by the popes. If we may judge concerning councils by the things that have been decreed in them, we ſhall be far from being prejudiced in their favour; their ſanction having been pleaded for things the moſt repugnant to reaſon and the plaineſt ſenſe of ſcripture, as has been ſufficiently manifeſted in the courſe of this work.

Councils were moſt frequent in the times of the chriſtian emperors at Conſtantinople, and of the chriſtian princes of Europe, from the fall of the Roman empire till towards the end of the eighth century. But the publication of the forged decretals of Iſidore at that period made a great change with reſpect to councils, the juriſdiction of biſhops, and appeals. For councils became leſs frequent when they could not be held without the pope's leave; and the interruption of provincial councils was a great wound, ſays Fleury, to eccleſiaſtical juriſdiction *.

The firſt who ſeems to have maintained the infallibity of councils is Barlaam, who exhorts one of his friends to return to the communion of the church of Rome, becauſe a council at Lyons, being lawfully aſſembled, and having condemned the errors of the Greeks, he muſt then be conſidered as an heretic, cut off from the church, if

* Seventh Diſcourſe, p. 13.

he

he did not ſubmit to it. But Occam, who lived at the ſame time, viz. in the fourteenth century, ſpeaks of it as the opinion of ſome doctors only, while others ſay this infallibility was a privilege of the college of cardinals, and others of the pope himſelf. It was a queſtion, however, that did not begin to be agitated till that time, and it was then diſputed very calmly. It was more openly debated during the differences between the popes and the councils; when the councils ſetting themſelves up above the popes, determined that themſelves, and not the popes, were appointed by God to judge in the laſt reſort concerning articles of faith. The council of Conſtance made no deciſion on this ſubject, but that of Baſil did, ſaying that it was blaſphemy to doubt that the Holy Spirit dictated their reſolutions, decrees, and canons; while the pope, and the council of Florence, declared the contrary, and it is not yet determined which of theſe was a lawful council *.

The moſt eminent of the catholic writers themſelves have maintained different opinions on this ſubject, and have been much influenced by the circumſtances in which they wrote. But this was moſt remarkably the caſe with Æneas Sylvius, who had with great boldneſs maintained the

* Baſnage, vol. iii. p. 518.

authority

authority of the council of Baſil againſt Eugenius IV. but being made pope (by the name of Pius II.) he publiſhed a ſolemn recantation of all that he had written upon that ſubject; declaring without ſhame or heſitation, that as Æneas Sylvius he was a damnable heretic, but as Pius II. he was an orthodox pontiff*. At preſent the opinion of the infallibility of the pope being generally given up by the catholics, they ſuppoſe the ſeat of infallibility (for it is an incontrovertible maxim with them that there muſt be ſuch a ſeat) to be in the councils.

The proteſtants themſelves had originally no diſpute about the authority of truly general councils. Luther appealed to a general council regularly aſſembled, and engaged to abide by its deciſion †. Calvin maintained in expreſs terms, that the univerſal church is infallible, and that God muſt annul his ſolemn promiſes if it be otherwiſe ‡.

At preſent, however, it is not, I believe, the opinion of any proteſtant, that any aſſembly of men is infallible. But it is thought by ſome to be lawful and convenient to call ſuch an aſſembly of divines, to determine what ſhould be the arti-

* Moſheim, vol. iii. p. 247. † Ib. vol. iii. p. 322.
‡ Baſnage, vol. iii. p. 499.

cles

cles of faith in particular eſtabliſhed churches, or ſuch as ſhould have the countenance of particular ſtates. The ſynod of Dort in Holland made decrees concerning articles of faith, and proceeded in as rigorous a manner againſt thoſe who did not conform to them, as any popiſh ſynod or council could have done. The time is not yet come, though we may hope that it is approaching, when the abſurdity of all interference of *power*, civil or eccleſiaſtical, in matters of religion ſhall be generally underſtood and acknowledged.

APPENDIX II.

TO

PARTS X. AND XI.

Of the Authority of the Secular Powers, or the Civil Magiſtrate, in Matters of Religion.

WE have ſeen the daring attempts to introduce an arbitrary authority, ſo as to decide concerning articles of faith, as well as concerning matters of diſcipline, made firſt by the popes, who were nothing more, originally, than biſhops of the ſingle church of Rome, and afterwards, by councils, or a number of biſhops and other eccleſiaſtical perſons. This uſurpation led the way to another, not indeed ſo exceſſive in the extent to which it has been carried, but much more abſurd in its nature. The former uſurpations were of the *clergy*, who might be ſuppoſed to have ſtudied, and therefore to have underſtood, the chriſtian ſyſtem; but the latter is by mere *laymen*, who cannot be ſuppoſed to have given much attention to religion, and conſequently muſt be very ill prepared to decide authoritatively con-

cerning its doctrines or rites. Of this nature is the eccleſiaſtical authority which, upon the reformation, was transferred from the popes to the ſecular powers of the different ſtates of Europe, and more eſpecially that which was aſſumed by the king and parliaments of England.

The Roman emperors, when they became chriſtians, did, indeed, interfere in the buſineſs of religion; but it was either to confirm the election of biſhops (which was ſoon perceived to be of conſiderable importance to them in civil matters) or to convoke ſynods, or general aſſemblies, when, as they apprehended, the peace of the ſtate was in danger of being diſturbed by hereſies, and factions in the church. But though they ſometimes ſigned the decrees of the ſynods, it was never ſuppoſed that their vote was neceſſary to the validity of them; and though they regulated the revenues, and other things of an external nature reſpecting the church, they never preſumed to pronounce either by their own ſingle authority, or that of the ſenate in conjunction with them, what was truth or what was falſehood, what ceremonies ought to be admitted, and what ought to be rejected, as has been done by the civil governors of Europe ſince the reformation.

Conſtantine, who was himſelf preſident, or moderator in the council of Nice, ſpeaking to the biſhops on that occaſion, ſaid, as was mentioned before,

before, " Ye are biſhops of things within the " church, but I am biſhop as to externals." And long afterwards, when the civil and eccleſiaſtical powers were much more intermixed, Charlemaigne, in a letter to the churches of Spain, ſays, concerning the council which he had held at Franckfort, " I have taken place among the " biſhops, both as an auditor, and arbitrator. " We have ſeen, and by the grace of God we " have decreed that which ought firmly to be " believed *." But though this great prince ſays *We have decreed*, it is not probable that he himſelf had ſo much as a proper vote in the reſolutions. If he had, he would hardly have called himſelf an *auditor*, or an *arbitrator*, though this ſeems to imply his having more power than that of giving a vote. Though it is not queſtioned that the emperors generally carried their point with the biſhops, and got them to make what decrees they pleaſed, it was by their intereſt with them, and influence over them, and not by a proper authority. And during the prevalence of the papal power, the ſtate was ſo far from encroaching upon the church, that eccleſiaſtics uſurped upon the ſecular power, ſo as even to make and depoſe kings.

A ſeries of facts relating to the eccleſiaſtical hiſtory of England, will abundantly confirm what I have hear advanced concerning the uſurpation

* Milot's Hiſt. of France, p. 62.

of the rights of Chriſt, and of God, by the civil magiſtracy of this kingdom.

When Henry VIII. ſhook off his dependence upon the pope in 1531, he was far from aboliſhing their uſurped and anti-chriſtian power. He only transferred it from the pope to himſelf, claiming the title of *ſole and ſupreme head of the church of England.* The abſurdity of acknowledging a layman as ſupreme head of an eccleſiaſtical body, was a thing ſo new and ſtrange, that the clergy would not admit it at firſt without this clauſe, *As far as it is agreeable to the laws of Chriſt.* But after a year or two, viz. in 1533, the *act of ſupremacy*, as it was called, paſſed the parliament, and the convocation alſo, without that clauſe.

By this celebrated act the whole power of reforming hereſies and errors, in doctrine and worſhip, was transferred from the pope to the king, without any regard to the rights of ſynods or councils of clergy; and without giving any liberty to thoſe who could not comply with the public ſtandard. This act expreſſes that "the kings of "this realm, and all their ſucceſſors, ſhall have "full power and authority to viſit, repreſs, redreſs, "reform, order, correct, reſtrain, and amend, all "errors, hereſies, abuſes, contempts, and enormi-"ties, whatſoever they be*." It was alſo ordered in this reign, that all the appeals which had before

* Neal's Hiſtory, vol. i. p. 8.

been

been made to Rome, were to be made to the king's chancery, to be determined as the manner now is, by delegates*.

This king, indeed, in his letter to the convocation at York, aſſured them that he claimed nothing more by the *ſupremacy*, than what chriſtian princes in primitive times aſſumed to themſelves in their own dominions. But the contrary of this may eaſily be demonſtrated. For by an act paſſed in the thirty-firſt year of this reign, it was enacted, that whatſoever his majeſty ſhould enjoin in matters of religion, ſhould be obeyed by all his ſubjects. Such language as this was never held by any of the chriſtian emperors.

The words of Mr. Hooker, who is generally allowed to be one of the ableſt advocates of the church of England, are very expreſs to this purpoſe. He ſays, "If the whole eccleſiaſtical ſtate "ſtand in need of being viſited and reformed, or "when any part of the church is infeſted with "error, ſchiſm, hereſies, &c. whatſoever ſpiritual "power the legates had from the ſee of Rome, "and exerciſed in right of the pope, for remedy-"ing of evil, without violating the laws of God "or nature, as much, in every degree have our "laws fully granted to the king for ever, what-"ever he thinks fit to do by eccleſiaſtical ſynods, "or otherwiſe according to law †."

* Neal's Hiſtory, vol. i. p. 88. † Ib. p. 86.

Henry VIII. Edward VI. queen Mary, queen Elizabeth, and Charles I. all publiſhed inſtructions or injunctions, concerning matters of faith, without the conſent of the clergy, in convocation aſſembled, and enforced them upon the clergy, under the penalty of premunire. So jealous was queen Elizabeth of this branch of her prerogative, that ſhe would not ſuffer the parliament to paſs any bill for the amendment or alteration of any of the ceremonies of the church; it being, as ſhe ſaid, an invaſion of her prerogative. By one clauſe in the act of uniformity the queen was empowered, by the advice of her commiſſioners or metropolitans, to ordain and publiſh *farther* ceremonies and rites; and had it not been for this clauſe, by which ſhe reſerved a power to make what alterations ſhe thought fit, ſhe told archbiſhop Parker, that ſhe would not have paſſed the act*.

It is not eaſy to reconcile theſe claims of Henry VIII. and queen Elizabeth with that article of the church of England, which aſſerts that the *church has authority in controverſies of faith*, if by *church* be meant the clergy. For the Engliſh clergy, as a body, were ſo far from having any hand in the buſineſs of reformation, that they oppoſed it as far as ever lay in their power. Beſides, if it be granted that this abſolute power is in the church, the reformation itſelf was un-

* Neal's Hiſt. vol. i. p. 93.

lawful,

lawful, and all that Henry VIII. and our other princes have done in this buſineſs is, by their own confeſſion, unjuſtifiable.

After the act of ſupremacy, there could be no abſolute neceſſity for our kings to conſult even the parliament upon this ſubject. Henry, however generally choſe to do it, in order to give the ſtronger ſanction to his own deciſions. Thus the famous law of the *ſix articles*, commonly called the *bloody ſtatute*, and which was entitled *An act for aboliſhing a diverſity of opinions in certain articles concerning the chriſtian religion*, was an act of parliament, paſſed in the year 1538. In this act was a ratification of ſeveral of the moſt important doctrines or articles of popery, and it continued in force till the end of this king's reign. In a very ſhort time five hundred perſons were impriſoned in conſequence of it, among whom was the famous biſhop Latimer.

This king ſeems even to have claimed an *infallibility* equal to that which has been arrogated by the popes, and to have acted in all reſpects as if he had the conſciencies and the faith of all his people at his abſolute diſpoſal. For in the thirty-ſecond year of his reign, it was enacted that "All decrees "and ordinances, made with the kings advice and "confirmation, in and upon the matters of chriſ-"tian faith, and lawful rites and ceremonies, ſhall "be, in every point thereof believed, obeyed, and "performed, to all intents and purpoſes, upon

" the pains therein comprized, provided nothing " be ordained contrary to the laws of the realm." " And afterwards, when the articles of the church of England were firſt compiled, which was under Edward VI. in 1551, they were drawn up by Cranmer and others, and received the ſanction of the royal authority in council only, without being brought to parliament or convocations, though the title expreſſes as much*.

In the firſt year of queen Elizabeth the parliament alone eſtabliſhed the queen's ſupremacy and the Common Prayer, in ſpite of great oppoſition by the biſhops in the houſe of lords; and the convocation then ſitting, was ſo far from having any hand in thoſe acts of reformation, that the members of it preſented to the parliament ſeveral propoſitions in favour of the tenets of popery, directly contrary to the proceedings of parliament.

In the life of Mr. Whiſton we have a remarkable inſtance of the very little conſequence which the *church* of England, as it is generally underſtood, is of, in deciding religious controverſies. For when a convocation had ſat upon his writings concerning the doctrine of the trinity, and pronounced them to be heretical and dangerous, queen Ann interpoſed; and not chuſing to ratify their ſentence, all the proceedings came to nothing. Thus, as was obſerved on the occaſion, the voice

* Neal's Hiſtory, vol. i. p. 50.

of

of a *woman*, which the apoſtle Paul does not allow to be even heard in the church, had more weight than that of all the *churchmen* in a body. Can theſe things be agreeable to the conſtitution of the goſpel? Both the clergy and the queen were interfering in a buſineſs in which they had no right to meddle; and it is ſometimes pleaſant to ſee one uſurper checking the violence of another.

It is remarkable that this clauſe in the *articles*, by which it is ordained that the *church*, and not the *king* (who, however is acknowledged to be the ſupreme head of the church) ſhould have authority in controverſies of faith, was not in the firſt articles compiled by Cranmer, and which were forty-two in number, but was introduced into them when they were reviſed, and new modelled, in the reign of queen Elizabeth. But nobody can tell why or wherefore that clauſe came to be inſerted, it being manifeſtly inconſiſtent with other acts of the legiſlature, and with the conduct of our princes according to thoſe acts *.

To theſe remarks I ſhall add, that ſeveral of the moſt important acts of ſpiritual juriſdiction, relating to the revenues and diſcipline of the church of England, are performed by laymen. For the chancellors, officials, and ſurrogates, who paſs cenſures and excommunicate, frequently are,

* Neal's Hiſtory, vol. i. p. 50.

and

and by expreſs law always may be, laymen; and the biſhops have no power to controul the proceedings of the courts which go by their name.

The houſe of Commons, which took up arms againſt Charles I. aſſumed the ſame authority in matters of religion that had been uſurped by the preceding kings. And the preſbyterians, of which ſect they chiefly conſiſted, would have enacted ſome perſecuting and ſanguinary laws, if they had not been reſtrained by Oliver Cromwell, at the head of the Independents. Theſe being the ſmaller number, would certainly have been ſuppreſſed by any act of uniformity; and it is not improbable, that, in conſequence of being in this ſituation, they might ſooner than any other ſect in this country, hit upon the true chriſtian principle of religious liberty, which entirely excludes the civil magiſtrate from interfering with it. At the reſtoration, the ſame church eſtabliſhment, with the ſame powers in the king and in the parliament, was reſumed; and every thing reverted into the ſame channel, or nearly the ſame, in which they had been in the reign of queen Elizabeth.

It is ſomething remarkable, that this glaring impropriety, of merely civil magiſtrates deciding concerning articles of chriſtian faith, which muſt neceſſarily be undertaken by all civil governors who preſume to make any eſtabliſhment of chriſtianity (that is, of what they take to be chriſtianity) in any country, ſhould not ſtrike more than

than it generally does; and that on this ground only all civil eſtabliſhments of chriſtianity ſhould not be exploded; ſince all chriſtians profeſs to acknowledge no Father beſides God, and no maſter beſides Chriſt, and to ſtand faſt in the liberty with which he has made us free. If there be any meaning in this, it muſt be that no human authority ſhould be permitted to make that neceſſary to chriſtian communion which Chriſt has not made neceſſary, but left undetermined, and conſequently indifferent. There are inſtances, however, of this abſurdity having been noticed in ſeveral periods of our hiſtory, beſides that which I have mentioned, when the claim of Henry VIII. to be the ſupreme head of the church was firſt ſtarted.

When the act of uniformity was paſſed, in the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth, in 1559, Heath, archbiſhop of York, made an excellent ſpeech againſt it; obſerving that it ought to have had the conſent of the clergy in convocation, before it paſſed into a law. "Not only orthodox, but "even Arian emperors," ſays he, "ordained that "points of faith ſhould be examined in councils; "and Gallio, by the light of nature, knew that "a civil judge ought not to meddle with matters "of religion." But he was over-ruled; the act which paſſed that very day, having veſted that power in the crown.

When

When that law was made, in the reign of William and Mary, which makes it blaſphemy, puniſhable with confiſcation of goods and impriſonment for life, if perſiſted in, to deny the doctrine of the trinity, lord Feverſham, who had no objection to the doctrine which was to be guarded by that law, expreſſed his diſlike of the civil magiſtrate interfering to guard it, in very ſtrong terms. He ſaid, that he acknowledged the houſes of parliament might lay upon the ſubject what taxes they pleaſed, and might even make a king; but he did not like the idea of a *parliamentary religion*, and a *parliamentary God*. Such, however, in fact, is the eſtabliſhed religion of this country. It is ſuch a religion as the king, lords, and commons of this realm have thought proper to make for themſelves, and to impoſe upon the people; who certainly ought to judge for themſelves, in a matter which ſo nearly concerns them as individuals, and of which they are as competent judges as their ſuperiors. Such an uſurped authority as this ought to be oppoſed; eſpecially when it is conſidered that the power by which this mode of religion is enforced, is preciſely the ſame with that of the popes, having been tranſferred from them to our princes.

Excluſive of every thing contained in the religion of the church of England, it is chiefly the *authority* by which it is enjoined that Diſſenters object to in it. Things in their own nature ever ſo

ſo indifferent, are no longer ſo, when the authority by which they are enforced is improper and boundleſs. It is upon the ſame juſt maxim that we always profeſs to act in things of a civil nature. A tax of a penny is what no man would value, of itſelf; but it would be a juſtifiable cauſe of a civil war, if our kings only, without the concurrence of parliament, ſhould preſume to enforce that tax. Becauſe a tax that begins with a penny might end in a pound, or extend to a man's whole property. In like manner, a power that alters a ſingle article of faith, or impoſes one rite, might change the whole ſyſtem. It was, therefore, ſo far from being the mark of a *weak* mind, that it was an evidence of great, juſt, and enlarged views, in the puritans, to reſiſt, as they did, the *impoſition* of things in their own nature indifferent. To have ſubmitted, would have been to acknowledge another ſupreme power in the church beſides that of Chriſt.

This is the true and ſolid ground of a diſſent from the church of England. It is declaring, (and it is the only proper and effectual mode of declaring) that we will acknowledge no *human authority* in matters of religion; but that we will judge for ourſelves in a buſineſs which ſo nearly concerns us, and not ſuffer others to judge for us; and that in the worſhip of God, and what reſpects our happineſs in a future world, we will only obey him whoſe power extends to that world, that is *God*, and not *man*.

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It is, moreover, evidently agreeable to the maxims of the goſpel, that every chriſtian make an *open declaration*, both by his words, and by his conduct, of what he believes concerning it. This is moſt expreſsly declared to be obligatory upon us with reſpect to chriſtianity in general. And for the ſame reaſon it ought to be extended to every important diſtinction in the profeſſion of chriſtianity, and eſpecially what relates to the *ſeat of power*, or authority in the church of Chriſt. Our Lord hath ſaid, *If any man be aſhamed of me, and of my words, of him will the ſon of man, be aſhamed, when he comes in his own glory, and the glory of his father.*

Had chriſtianity been a ſyſtem of ſpeculative opinions only, and had not required a conformity in our practice, and ſuch as is *viſible to the world*, every degree of perſecution might be avoided. But this, we know, was not the caſe in the primitive times. All true chriſtians then thought themſelves obliged not to make the leaſt concealment of their opinions, whatever they might ſuffer in conſequence of their profeſſion. In like manner, every proteſtant ought to be a declared proteſtant, and not deny his principles by communicating with the idolatrous church of Rome. And for the very ſame reaſon every man who thinks that the church of England uſurps an undue authority over the conſciences of men, ſimilar to that of the church of Rome, ought to be a *declared Diſſenter*, and ſeparate from the eſtabliſhed

:ſtabliſhed church, whatever ridicule, or perſecu-ion of any kind, he may expoſe himſelf to on :hat account.

If the primitive chriſtians, or the firſt refor-ners from popery, could have been contented with keeping their opinions to themſelves, while they conformed to the religion of their country, they might have avoided all the inconveniences to which the public profeſſion of their principles expoſed them; and in this they would have followed the example of all the heathen philoſophers, whoſe maxim it was, *to think with the wiſe, and act with the vulgar*; and who ridiculed the chriſtians for not doing the ſame. For all the philoſophers held the popular ſuperſtitions in the ſame contempt with the chriſtians themſelves. But no true chriſtian, or proteſtant, will venture to ſacrifice ſo much to their worldly eaſe and ſafety. And were not many of the preſent members of the church of England either groſsly ignorant of the nature of religion, inattentive to what belonged to it, or governed by the heatheniſh maxim abovementioned, they would not dare to countenance by their concurrence, what they may eaſily know to be groſs corruptions of chriſtianity, and eſpecially an uſurpation of the rights of God and of Chriſt.

There is another ſtate in Europe, in which the prince aſſumes an eccleſiaſtical power independent of the pope. For the kings of Sicily pretend

to

to be by birth *Legates a latere* to the holy ſee, and to have a power of abſolving, puniſhing, and excommunicating all perſons, even cardinals themſelves, who reſide in their kingdom. They alſo preſide in provincial councils, and act in all reſpects independently of the court of Rome. Their ſtyle is *Beatiſimo et ſantiſimo padre*, and they attribute to themſelves in Sicily the ſame power that the popes have with reſpect to the reſt of the church. The Sicilians claim this right from a bull of Urban II. granted in 1097 to Roger the Norman king of Sicily, and to his ſucceſſors. But the advocates for the court of Rome ſay that this bull was forged, during the long time that the iſland had no communication with the holy ſee. For it continued ninety years under an interdict, beginning in 1282. Hence, however, have ariſen violent diſputes between the kings of Sicily and the popes. But to this day the kings of Sicily exerciſe that juriſdiction, and are in fact popes within their own territories. On this account F. Simon ſays there are three popes in Chriſtendom, viz. at Rome, in Sicily, and in England; the two laſt, however, deriving their power from the firſt, the kings of Sicily by voluntary conceſſion, and the kings of England by force *.

* Simon on Church Revenues, p. 116. Moſheim, vol. ii. p. 231.

APPENDIX III.

TO

PARTS X. AND XI.

Of the Authority of Tradition, and of the Scriptures, &c.

WE have ſeen the pretenſions of the popes, of councils, and alſo of civil magiſtrates, to decide controverſies of faith. It may not be improper, in the concluſion of this ſubject, to conſider two other authorities, viz. thoſe of *tradition* and of the *ſcriptures*. As the Jewiſh and chriſtian religions are of divine origin, it behoves us to examine as carefully as we can, the channels by which theſe divine communications have been conveyed to us; and theſe can be no other than *oral tradition*, or *writing*; and of theſe the latter is certainly preferable, whenever it can be had, provided we have ſufficient evidence that we have the genuine writings of the inſpired prophets themſelves. But in many caſes even tradition ought not to be ſlighted.

Thoſe chriſtians who were not converted by the apoſtles themſelves, and who lived before the publication of any of the canonical books of the New Teſtament, could not have had any other foundation for their faith. We ourſelves admit theſe books to be canonical on no other foundation; and by calling them *canonical*, we mean no more than that they are the genuine productions of thoſe perſons whoſe names they bear, or of the times to which they are uſually aſcribed; and therefore they are of themſelves of no authority, but as the moſt indiſputable evidence of what it was that Chriſt and the apoſtles did teach and practiſe as from God; and it cannot be made to appear that the ſame thing may not be ſufficiently proved by other means. We obſerve the firſt, and not the ſeventh day of the week, as a day of reſt, contrary to the known cuſtom of the Jews, which we believe to have been of divine appointment, upon no other authority than that of tradition; it being ſuppoſed to have been the invariable cuſtom of the church from the time of the apoſtles, and it being impoſſible to account for the origin of the preſent cuſtom, and of its being obſerved without the leaſt variation in churches that differ in almoſt every thing elſe, but upon that ſuppoſition. For we do not find in the New Teſtament, any expreſs order of Chriſt, or of the apoſtles, that ſuch a change ſhould be made.

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When, therefore, we ſpeak of tradition as an improper foundation for faith and practice, we muſt mean only pretended, or ill-founded traditions; ſuch as were alleged by ſeveral of thoſe who were called heretics in very early times, or by the church of Rome at preſent. But, in this caſe, we object to the opinions and practices, not merely becauſe we find no trace of them in the ſcriptures, but becauſe we find no ſufficient authority for them at all.

Some of the antient heretics are ſaid, by Auſtin and others, to have availed themſelves of this ſource of credit; laying great ſtreſs on our Lord's ſaying to his diſciples, that he had many things to ſay to them which they were not able to bear at the time that he was with them, and pretending that the apoſtles themſelves, beſides preaching to all perſons indiſcriminately, made a reſerve of ſome things to be taught more privately, or only to a few. But there does not appear to have been any ſufficient foundation for that pretence; all their teaching having been public, and nothing concealed from any perſons who were deſirous of being inſtructed. Much leſs was there any reaſon to think that the particular things which they wiſhed to ſupport by this pretence were among the things revealed to thoſe few. Beſides, our Lord himſelf ſeems to have precluded every pretence of this kind, by telling his apoſtles, that whatever they heard of him in

private, they ſhould proclaim in public. Matt. x. 26.

The church of Rome has adopted a variety of cuſtoms, and founded many claims, upon this authority of tradition. But in what was called the *catholic church*, no recourſe was had to tradition before the ſecond council of Nice, in 787, in which the worſhip of images was eſtabliſhed; when many things which had generally been aſſented to, and practiſed before that time, had no foundation in the ſcriptures, or in the reaſon of things. This council, therefore, expreſsly anathematized all thoſe who did not receive eccleſiaſtical traditions, written or unwritten. But the things which the members of this council alleged as proper to be received on ſuch authority, are exceedingly fooliſh and abſurd.

The authority of the books of the New Teſtament, ſuppoſing them to be genuine, is the very ſame with that of the apoſtles themſelves. But, in very early times, this does not appear to have been ſo great as it came to be afterwards. Though it was never doubted that Paul was an inſpired apoſtle, and received the knowledge he had of the goſpel from Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, yet we find by his own writings that there were violent factions againſt him all his life, and that his opinions were by no means implicitly received. He himſelf is far from inſiſting that every thing

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he aſſerted was to be received without examination. On the contrary, the various arguments he produces in ſupport of his aſſertions, without alleging any other authority for them, ſhews that his concluſions were drawn from the premiſes which he alleged, and which he ſubmitted to the examination of his readers. He muſt, therefore, have ſuppoſed that they would think themſelves at liberty to judge for themſelves; and that, as he ſubmitted his reaſoning to their examination, they would decide for or againſt him, according as his arguments ſhould appear to them concluſive or inconcluſive.

When this apoſtle does not reaſon at all, but merely declares that he had his information from Chriſt, we receive it on the credit of a man, whom we ſuppoſe to have been neither impoſed upon himſelf, nor to have had any intereſt in impoſing upon others; and likewiſe of his being a perſon whoſe authority in general was ſupported by his power of working miracles. Of this kind is the account which he gives us of the reſurrection of the dead, and the change that will paſs upon the living ſubſequent to it; and alſo his account of the inſtitution of the Lord's ſupper, &c.

Nor was this the caſe of Paul only, who was peculiarly obnoxious to the Jews, on account of his zeal in preaching the goſpel to the gentiles.

For Peter himſelf, who is called the *apoſtle of the circumciſion*, and who was conſidered as the very *chief of the apoſtles*, was not more reſpected, whenever he ſaid or did any thing that was thought to be improper. This appeared very clearly in the caſe of Cornelius, and in the altercation that Paul had with him at Antioch.

On the former of theſe occaſions, when the conduct of Peter was arraigned, he vindicated himſelf, not by aſſerting that what he did was by expreſs direction from heaven (though he was led to what he did by expreſs revelations, made both to himſelf, and alſo to Cornelius) but by a ſimple narrative of facts, from which they might themſelves judge, that what he had done was not without ſufficient authority. And even when all the apoſtles were met, to conſider of what was to be done with reſpect to the ſuppoſed obligation of the gentile converts to obſerve the Jewiſh ceremonies, they ſeem not to have had any immediate inſpiration. For they reaſoned and deliberated upon the ſubject; which ſeems to imply that there was for ſome time a difference of opinion among them, though they afterwards concurred in giving the advice that they did, and in which they concluded that they had the concurrence of the Holy Spirit.

But even this *decree*, as it is now generally called, which had the authority, as we may ſay, of

of the whole college of apoſtles, does not ſeem to have been reliſhed by all chriſtians; as we may infer from the enmity which the Jewiſh converts in general bore to Paul, and from the Nazarenes, or Jewiſh chriſtians, never making uſe of his writings. For though they were not written in a language which they underſtood, it would not have been more difficult to procure a tranſlation of them, than of the goſpel of Matthew, which was alſo probably written in Greek.

Indeed, what is univerſally acknowledged to have been the ſtate of the Jewiſh chriſtians could not have been true, if they had had the ſame ideas that were afterwards entertained, of the conſtant inſpiration of the apoſtles and evangeliſts. A great part of them rejected the account of our Lord's miraculous conception, and though they made uſe of the goſpel of Matthew in Hebrew, they omitted the two firſt chapters, in which it is aſſerted; not, as far as appears, queſtioning their being written by Matthew, but not thinking the contents of them ſufficiently well founded; and yet they did not, on account of this difference of opinion, ceaſe to communicate with one another. Nor does Juſtin Martyr, who mentions their opinion long afterwards, paſs any cenſure upon them on account of it. He only ſays, that he cannot think as they did; and what is more remarkable, he does not men-

tion the authority of Matthew and Luke, as what was deciſive againſt them. Theſe Jewiſh chriſtians would certainly have treated the goſpel of Luke in the ſame manner as they did that of Matthew, if they had been acquainted with it, and had thought proper to make uſe of it at all.

When the Jewiſh church was firſt formed, and indeed ſo late as the publication of the goſpel, many of the diſciples would think themſelves as good judges of the hiſtory of Chriſt, as the evangeliſts themſelves. They did not want thoſe books for their own uſe, and would judge concerning the contents of them, as they would concerning other books which implied an appeal to living witneſſes. That the books were generally received, and not immediately rejected, by thoſe to whom they were addreſſed, is a proof that the hiſtory which they contained is in the main authentic, but by no means proves that every minute circumſtance in them is true. Indeed the evangeliſts, varying from one another in many particulars (which may be ſeen in the diſſertations prefixed to my *Harmony of the Goſpels*) proves that they wrote partly from their recollection, which might be imperfect in things of little conſequence, and partly from the beſt information which they could collect from other perſons.

Like

Like other credible hiſtorians, all the evangeliſts agree in the main things, but they differ exceedingly in the order of their narrative, and with reſpect to incidents of little conſequence; and to contend for any thing more than this is in effect to injure their credibility. If the agreement among them had been as exact as ſome pretend, it would have been natural for the enemies of chriſtianity to have ſaid, that they muſt have been written by combination, and therefore that the hiſtory has not the concurrent teſtimony of independent witneſſes; and if the exactneſs contended for cannot be proved, the authority of the whole muſt be given up.

Beſides, what would have been the uſe of appointing twelve apoſtles, or witneſſes of the life and reſurrection of Chriſt, if their teſtimony was not naturally ſufficient to eſtabliſh the credibility of the facts; and what would have ſignified even the original inſpiration, unleſs all error in tranſcribing, and tranſlating, &c. had been prevented by the ſame miraculous interpoſition, in all ages, and in all nations afterwards. Having written more largely upon this ſubject in my *Inſtitutes of Natural and Revealed Religion*, and alſo in the preface to my *Harmony of the Goſpels*, to thoſe works I beg leave to refer any readers with reſpect to this ſubject. I would alſo refer them to what I have written under the ſignature of *Paulinus*, in the *Theological Repoſitory*, in which I think I have ſhewn

ſhewn, that the apoſtle Paul often reaſons inconcluſively, and therefore that he wrote as any other perſon of his turn of mind and thinking, and in his ſituation, would have written, without any particular inſpiration. Facts, ſuch as I think I have there alleged, are ſtubborn things, and all hypotheſes muſt be accommodated to them.

Not only the Nazarenes, but chriſtians of other denominations alſo, rejected ſeveral of the books of our New Teſtament, and without denying the authenticity of them (for with this they are not, in general, charged) but becauſe they did not approve of their contents. Thus the Gnoſtics in general made but little uſe of the canonical books, and pleaded the authority of tradition, and the Helceſaites, in the time of the emperor Philip, are ſaid to have rejected all the epiſtles of Paul, though the authenticity of them was never queſtioned.

When the apoſtles were dead, the authority of their writings would naturally riſe, and appeals would be made to them when controverſies aroſe in the church. And this natural and univerſal deference to the opinion of the apoſtles produced, I doubt not, at length, the opinion of their infallibility. Their authority was alſo juſtly oppoſed to the many idle traditions that were pretended to by ſome of the early heretics, and to the ſpurious goſpels that were written after the *four* had acquired

acquired credit. Till that time there could be no inducement to write others, and notwithſtanding the reception that ſome of the forged goſpels met with in certain places, they never operated to the diſcredit of the four genuine ones (and indeed they were only written as ſupplemental to them) it appears that they were eaſily diſtinguiſhed from the genuine goſpels, and did not retain any credit long. And what we are able to collect of them at this day is enough to ſatisfy us, that they were not rejected without ſufficient reaſon.

The Jews, in forming their canon of ſacred books, ſeem in general to have made it a rule to comprize within their code all books written by prophets; and therefore, though they had other books, which they valued, and might think very uſeful in the conduct of life, they never read them in their ſynagogues. Theſe books were afterwards called *apocryphal*, conſiſting of pieces of very different character, partly hiſtorical, and partly moral.

Theſe apocryphal books were not much uſed by chriſtians, till they were found to favour ſome ſuperſtitious opinions and practices, the riſe of which I have already traced, and eſpecially the worſhip of ſaints. For at the council of Laodicea, in 364, the Hebrew canon was adopted. But in the third council of Carthage, in 397, the apocryphal books were admitted, as canonical and divine,

divine, and were therefore allowed to be read in public, eſpecially Eccleſiaſticus, Wiſdom, Tobit, Judith, and the two books of Maccabees. The popes Innocent, Gelaſius, and Hormiſdas confirmed the decrees of this council *.

The church having afterwards adopted the verſion of Jerom, which followed the Hebrew canon, the apocryphal books began to loſe the authority which they had acquired; and it was never fully re-eſtabliſhed, till the council of Florence in 1442; and it was then done principally to give credit to the doctrine of purgatory. It was for a ſimilar reaſon that the council of Trent made a decree to the ſame purpoſe †. Alſo, though before the ſecond council of Nice the ſcriptures alone were conſidered as the ſtandard of faith, it was then decreed, for the firſt time, that they who deſpiſed traditions ſhould be excommunicated ‡.

Notwithſtanding the apparently little foundation which many of the popiſh doctrines have in the ſcriptures, it was very late before any meaſures were taken to prevent the common people from uſing them. Indeed, in the dark ages, there was no occaſion for any ſuch precaution, few perſons, even among the great and the beſt educated, being able to read at all. The Sclavo-

* Sueur, A. D. 397. Baſnage, vol. iii. p. 460.
† Ib. p. 463. 465. ‡ Ib. p. 488.

nians,

nians, who were converted to chriſtianity at the end of the ninth century, petitioned to have the ſervice in their own language, and it was granted to them. Pope John VIII. to whom the requeſt was made, thanked God that the Sclavonian character had been invented, becauſe God would be praiſed in that language. He ordered, however, that the goſpels ſhould be read in Latin, but that afterwards they ſhould be interpreted to the people, that they might underſtand them, as was done, he ſays, in ſome churches *.

But afterwards, Wratiſlas king of Bohemia applying to Gregory VII. for leave to celebrate divine ſervice in the ſame Sclavonian tongue, it was abſolutely refuſed. For, ſaid this pope, after conſidering of it, "it appeared that God choſe that "the ſcripture ſhould be obſcure in ſome places, "leſt if it was clear to all the world, it ſhould be "deſpiſed; and alſo lead people into errors, being "ill underſtood by their ignorance." This, ſays Fleury, was the beginning of ſuch prohibitions †.

The practice of the church of Rome at preſent is very various. In Portugal, Spain, Italy, and in general in all thoſe countries in which the inquiſition is eſtabliſhed, the reading of the ſcriptures is forbidden. France was divided on this ſubject, the Janſeniſts allowing it, and the Jeſuits

* Baſnage, vol. iii. 471. † A. D. 1080.

refuſing

refuſing it. For the council of Trent having declared the vulgate verſion of the Bible to be authentic, the Jeſuits maintained that this was meant to be a prohibition of any other verſion *.

After the council of Trent this evil was much increaſed. For the biſhops aſſembled at Bologna, by order of Julius III. adviſed that the reading of the ſcriptures ſhould be permitted as little as poſſible, becauſe the power of the popes had always been the greateſt when they were the leaſt read; alleging that it was the ſcriptures which had raiſed the dreadful tempeſt with which the church was almoſt ſunk, and that no perſon ought to be permitted to know more of them than is contained in the maſs. His ſucceſſor profited by this advice, and put the bible into the catalogue of *prohibited books* †.

The cardinal Cuſa, in order to juſtify the condemnation of Wickliffe, in the council of Conſtance, ſaid that the ſcriptures muſt be explained according to the preſent doctrine of the church; and that when the inſtitutions of the church change, the explication of the ſcripture ſhould change alſo; and the council of Trent has decided that traditions ought to be received with the ſame reſpect as the ſcriptures, becauſe they have the ſame authority ‡.

* Baſnage, vol. iii. p. 468. † Ib. 475. ‡ Ib. p. 489.

So

So much were the Roman catholics chagrined at the advantage which Luther, and the other reformers, derived from the ſcriptures, that, on ſome occaſions they ſpoke of them with ſo much indignation and diſreſpect, as is inconſiſtent with the belief of their authority, and of chriſtianity itſelf. Prieras, maſter of the ſacred palace, writing againſt Luther advances theſe two propoſitions, viz. that the ſcriptures derive all their authority from the church and the pope, and that indulgences, being eſtabliſhed by the church and the pope, have a greater authority than the ſcriptures. "How do we know," ſay ſome of theſe writers, "that the books which bear the name of Moſes "are his, ſince we have not the originals, and if "we had them, there is no perſon who knows "the hand-writing of Moſes? Beſides, how do "we know that all that Moſes has ſaid is true? "Were the evangeliſts witneſſes of all that they "write? And if they were, might not they be "defective in memory, or even impoſe upon us? "Every man is capable of deceiving, and being "deceived *."

All the popes, however, have not ſhewn the ſame dread of the ſcriptures. For Sixtus V. cauſed an Italian tranſlation of the bible to be publiſhed, though the zealous catholics were much offended at it †.

* Baſnage, vol. iii. p. 455, &c. † Hiſt. des Papes, vol. v. p. 80.

So

So much were the minds of all men oppreſſed with a reverence for antiquity, and the traditions of the church, at the time of the reformation, that the proteſtants were not a little embarraſſed by it in their controverſy with the catholics; many of the errors and abuſes of popery being diſcovered in the earlieſt chriſtian writers, after the apoſtolical age. But at preſent all proteſtants ſeem to entertain a juſt opinion of ſuch authority, and to think with Chillingworth, that *the bible alone is the religion of proteſtants*. We may, however, be very much embarraſſed by entertaining even this opinion in its greateſt rigour, as I have ſhewn in the introduction to this Appendix.

THE

HISTORY

OF THE

Corruptions of Chriſtianity.

PART XII.

The Hiſtory of the MONASTIC LIFE.

THE INTRODUCTION.

BESIDES thoſe miniſters of the chriſtian church whoſe titles we meet with in the New Teſtament, but whoſe powers and prerogatives have been prodigiouſly increaſed from that time to the preſent, we find that, excepting the *popes* alone, no leſs conſpicuous a figure was made by other orders of men, of whom there is not ſo much as the leaſt mention in the books of ſcripture, or the writings of the apoſtolical age. I mean the *monks*, and *religious orders* of a ſimilar conſtitution, which have more or leſs of a religious character.

The ſet of opinions which laid the foundation for the whole buſineſs of monkery, came origi-

nally from the Eaſt, and had been adopted by ſome of the Greek philoſophers, eſpecially Plato, viz. that the ſoul of man is a ſpiritual ſubſtance, and that its powers are clogged, and its virtues impeded, by its connection with the body. Hence they inferred that the greateſt perfection of mind is attained by the extenuation and mortification of its corporeal incumbrance. This notion operating with the indolent and melancholy turn of many perſons in the ſouthern hot climates of Aſia, and eſpecially of Egypt, led them to affect an auſtere ſolitary life, as deſtitute as poſſible of every thing that might pamper the body, or that is adapted to gratify thoſe appetites and paſſions which were ſuppoſed to have their ſeat in the fleſh. Hence aroſe the notion of the greater purity and excellency of celibacy, as well as a fondneſs for a retired and unſocial life, which has driven ſo many perſons in all ages from the ſociety of their brethren, to live either in abſolute ſolitude, or with perſons of the ſame gloomy turn with themſelves. It is the ſame principle that made Eſſenes among the Jews, Monks among Chriſtians, Derviſes among Mahometans, and Fakirs among Hindoos.

How apt chriſtians were to be ſtruck with the example of the heathens in this reſpect, we ſee in Jerom, who takes notice that paganiſm had many obſervances which, to the reproach even of chriſtians, implied a great ſtrictneſs of manner and diſcipline. "Juno," ſays he, "has her prieſteſſes, "devoted to one huſband, Veſta her perpetual "virgins,

virgins, and other idols their prieſts alſo, under vows of chaſtity *."

The perſecution of chriſtians by the heathen mperors, and conſequently the more imminent azard that attended living in cities, eſpecially with he incumbrance of families, was another circumance that contributed to drive many of the primitive chriſtians into deſarts and unfrequented laces. The irruptions of the northern nations into he Roman empire had an effect of the ſame kind, naking all cities leſs ſafe and comfortable. Moreover, when the great perſecutions were over, and onſequently the boaſted *crown of martyrdom* could ot be obtained in a regular way, many perſons inlicted upon themſelves a kind of voluntary maryrdom, in abandoning the world and all the enjoynents of life. Gregory Nazianzen, celebrating the uſterity of the monks of his country, ſays that ome of them, through an exceſs of zeal, killed hemſelves, in order to be releaſed from a wicked vorld †. It is poſſible, however, that they might ot directly kill themſelves, or intend to do it, ut only died in conſequence of depriving themelves of the uſual comforts of life. It was theſe uſterities, joined with ſuch imaginary *revelaions*, and intimate communications with heaven, s have uſually accompanied them, that was the reat recommendation of Montaniſm. The

* Middleton's Letters, p. 238. † Jortin's Remarks, vol. iii. p. 22.

Montaniſts, Tertullian ſays, had the ſame rule of faith, but more faſting and leſs marrying, than others *.

Theſe notions, and theſe circumſtances concurring, particular texts of ſcripture were eaſily found that ſeemed to countenance auſterities in general, and celibacy in particular; as that ſaying of our Saviour, Matt. xix. 12. *There are ſome who make themſelves Eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's ſake. He that can receive it, let him receive it*; and Paul's ſaying, 1 Cor. vii. 38. *He that giveth in marriage does well, but he that giveth not in marriage doth better.* Both theſe paſſages, however, probably relate to the times of perſecution, in which it is either abſolutely neceſſary to abandon the ſatisfaction of family relations, and domeſtic ſociety, or at leaſt in which it is moſt convenient to be free from every attachment of that kind; that when men were perſecuted in one city, they might, with more eaſe, and leſs diſtreſs of mind, flee to another.

But on every other occaſion marriage is ſpoken of in the moſt honourable terms in the ſcriptures, and is, indeed, neceſſary for the propagation of the human ſpecies. Beſides, Paul makes it a mark of that *man of ſin*, or *antichriſtian power*, which was to ariſe in the latter times, that it was

* De Jejuniis, Cap. i. Opera, p. 544.

to

to *forbid to marry*, as well as to make uſe of *meats which God hath created to be received with thankſgiving*. 2 Tim. iv. 3. In fact, theſe two circumſtances greatly contribute to point out the church of Rome as the principal ſeat of that antichriſtian corruption, of which ſo much is ſaid, and againſt which we are ſo earneſtly cautioned in the books of the New Teſtament.

Beſides, mens paſſions are far from being improved by the long continuance of this miſerable and ſolitary ſtate. Inſtead of approaching by this means, as they vainly pretended, to the life of angels, they rather ſink themſelves to the condition of brutes, and ſome of the moſt worthleſs or ſavage kinds. Alſo, living without labour themſelves (as in time the monks came to do) and upon the labour of others, and without adding to the number or ſtrength of the community, they certainly defeat the great purpoſes of their creation, as ſocial beings; and are not only a dead weight upon the community, but in many caſes, a real evil and nuiſance in thoſe ſtates in which they are eſtabliſhed.

SECTION I.

Of the Monaſtic Life till the Fall of the Weſtern Empire.

THERE is always ſomething uncertain and fabulous in the antiquities of all ſocieties, and it is ſo in thoſe of the monks. The monks themſelves acknowledge the firſt of their order to have been one *Paul*, an Egyptian, who in the ſeventh perſecution, or about the year 260, retired into a private cave, where he is ſaid to have lived many years, unſeen by any perſon, till one Anthony found him juſt before his death, put him into his grave, and followed his example.

This Anthony, finding many others diſpoſed to adopt the ſame mode of life, reduced them into ſome kind of order; and the regulations which he made for the monks of Egypt were ſoon introduced into Paleſtine and Syria by his diſciple Hilariun, into Meſopotamia by Aones and Eugenius, and into Armenia by Euſtachius biſhop of Sebaſtia. From the Eaſt this gloomy inſtitution paſſed into the Weſt; Baſil carrying it into Greece, and Ambroſe into Italy. St. Martin, the celebrated biſhop of Tours, firſt planted it in Gaul, and his funeral is ſaid to have been attended

ıttended by no leſs than two thouſand monks. 3ut the weſtern monks never attained the ſeverity)f the eaſtern *.

The number of theſe monks in very early imes was ſo great, as almoſt to exceed belief. 'leury ſays, that in Egypt alone they were com- ıuted, at the end of the fourth century, to exceed :venty thouſand †. With this increaſing number ıany diſorders were neceſſarily introduced among ıem. At the end of the fourth century the ıonks were obſerved to be very inſolent and centious; and having power with the people, ıey would ſometimes even force criminals om the hands of juſtice, as they were going to xecution ‡. In the time of Auſtin many real r pretended monks went ſtrolling about, as awkers and pedlars, ſelling bones and relics of ıartyrs.

The increaſe of monks was much favoured y the laws of chriſtian princes, and the encou- ıgement of the popes, as well as by the ſtrong :commendation of the moſt diſtinguiſhed wri- :rs of thoſe times. Juſtinian made a law that a ın ſhould not be diſinherited for becoming a ıonk contrary to his father's will; and Jovian)pointed that whoever courted a nun, and en-

' Moſheim, vol. i. p. 307. † Eighth Diſcourſe, p. 8.
: Sueur, A. D. 399.

ticed her to marry, ſhould be put to death. But this law, being thought too ſevere, was afterwards mitigated *. Syricius, biſhop of Rome, ordered that monks and virgins who married after their conſecration to God ſhould be baniſhed from their monaſteries, and confined in private cells; that by their continual tears they might efface their crime, and become worthy of communion before they died. The ſame pope ordered that biſhops and prieſts who were married, and had any commerce with their wives, ſhould be degraded from their office †.

The language in which the writers of thoſe times recommended a monkiſh life was ſometimes ſhocking and blaſphemous, eſpecially that of Jerom, who was the greateſt advocate for it in his time. Writing to Euſtochium the nun, he calls her *his lady*, becauſe ſhe was the *ſpouſe of Chriſt*; and he reminds her mother, that ſhe had the honour to be *God's mother in law* ‡.

Many women were ambitious of diſtinguiſhing themſelves by ſome of the peculiarities of the monkiſh life in theſe early times, devoting themſelves, as they imagined, to God, and living in virginity, but at firſt without forming themſelves into regular communities. Jerom prevailed upon

* Jortin's Remarks, vol. iv. p. 27. 38. † Sueur, A. D. 385.
‡ Ad Euſtochium Ep. 22. Opera, vol. i. p. 140, 144.

many

many women in Rome to embrace this kind of life; but they continued in their own houſes, from which they even made viſits; and it appears by an epitaph which he wrote for Marulla, that before her there was no woman of condition in Rome who lived in this manner; the common people of that city conſidering it as diſreputable, on account of the novelty of the thing *. Theſe early nuns were only diſtinguiſhed by wearing a veil, that was given them by the biſhop of the place. It was not till the year 567 that queen Radigonda founded the firſt monaſtery for women in France, which was confirmed by the council of Tours †?

No perfect uniformity can be expected in the cuſtoms and modes of living among men, and leaſt of all men whoſe imaginations were ſo eccentric as thoſe of the monks. Accordingly we find almoſt endleſs diſtinctions among them, ſome chuſing to live in one manner, and ſome in another. And in later times when they formed themſelves into regular ſocieties, and laid themſelves under an abſolute engagement to live according to certain rules, we find above a hundred kinds of men who aſſumed different names generally from their reſpective founders. But theſe diviſions and ſubdiviſions were the offspring of late ages.

* Sueur, A. D. 382. † Ibid, 567.

The

The moſt early diſtinction among them was only that of thoſe who lived quite ſingle and independent, and thoſe who lived in companies. The latter were called *Cœnobites* in Greek, in Latin *Monks* (though that term originally denoted an abſolutely ſolitary life) and ſometimes *friars* from *fratres*, *freres*, *brethren*, on account of their living together as brothers in one family. Theſe had a preſident called *abbot*, or *father*, and the place where they lived was called a *monaſtery*.

On the other hand, thoſe who lived ſingle were often called *eremites* or *hermits*, and commonly frequented caves and deſarts. And ſome make a farther diſtinction of theſe into *Anachorites*, whoſe manner of life was ſtill more ſavage, living without tents or cloathing, and only upon roots or other ſpontaneous productions of the earth. In Egypt ſome were called *Sarabites*. Theſe led a wandering life, and maintained themſelves chiefly by ſelling relics, and very often by various kinds of fraud *.

In early times it was not uncommon for perſons to paſs from one of theſe modes of life to the other; and in later ages it was ſometimes found to be very advantageous to the revenues of the ſociety, for the monks to become her-

* Moſheim, vol. i. p. 309.

mits

mits for a time, retiring from the monaſtery with the leave of the abbot. Theſe being much revered by the people, often got rich by their alms, and then depoſited their treaſures in their monaſteries *.

Perſons who live in proteſtant countries, or indeed in Roman catholic countries at preſent, can form no idea of the high reſpect and reverence with which monks were treated in early times. They were univerſally conſidered as beings of a higher rank and order than the reſt of mankind, and even ſuperior to the prieſts; and wherever they went, or could be found, the people crowded to them, loading them with alms, and begging an intereſt in their prayers. In this light, however, they were regarded in general. For ſome perſons may be found who thought ſenſibly in every age, and conſequently looked with contempt upon this ſpurious kind of religion, and affectation of extraordinary ſanctity.

In the fourth century, when all chriſtian countries ſwarmed with monks, we find one who, though he choſe that mode of life, was ſenſible of the ſuperſtitious notions that were very prevalent with reſpect to it, and ſtrenuouſly remonſtrated againſt them. This was Jovinian, who

* Simon on Church Revenues, p. 55.

towards

towards the conclusion of that century taught, first at Rome, and afterwards at Milan, that all who lived according to the gospel have an equal title to the rewards of heaven; and consequently that they who passed their days in unsocial celibacy and severe mortifications, were in no respect more acceptable in the sight of God than those who lived virtuously in the state of marriage. But these sensible opinions were condemned, first by the church of Rome, and afterwards by Ambrose bishop of Milan, in a council held in the year 390. The emperor Honorius seconded the proceedings of the council, and banished Jovinian as an heretic. The famous Jerom, also, wrote in a very abusive manner against the treatise of Jovinian, in which he maintained the above-mentioned opinions.

SECTION

SECTION II.

The Hiſtory of the Monks after the Fall of the Weſtern Empire.

HAVING given the preceding account of the origin and nature of the monkiſh eſtabliſhments, I proceed, in launching out into the dark ages, to point out the ſteps by which theſe monks attained that amazing power and influence which they acquired in the later ages, and to note other remarkable facts in their hiſtory, ſhewing both the good and the evil that aroſe from their inſtitution.

The primitive monks, courting ſolitude, were equally abſtracted from the affairs of the world, and thoſe of the church; and yet, by degrees, a very conſiderable part of the buſineſs in both departments came to be done by them. The principal circumſtance that favoured their advancement, and made their introduction into public life in a manner neceſſary, was the great ignorance of the *ſecular* clergy. For by this term the common clergy began to be diſtinguiſhed, on account of their living more after the manner of the world; while the monks, on account of their living according to an exact *rule*, got the name of *regulars*, and *religious*. The monks ſpending a great part of their time in contemplation, many of them were

were induced to give ſome attention to letters, and ſoon obtained a manifeſt ſuperiority over the clergy in that reſpect; and the chriſtian church was never without great occaſion for learned men.

Several hereſies, in particular, ſpringing up in the church, and ſome learned monks very ably oppoſing them, it was found convenient to draw them from their ſolitude, and to ſettle them in the ſuburbs of cities, and ſometimes in the cities themſelves, that they might be uſeful to the people. In conſequence of this, many of them, applying to ſtudy, got into holy orders. This was much complained of for ſome time; but being found uſeful to the biſhops themſelves, both in ſpiritual and temporal affairs, thoſe biſhops who were fond of a numerous clergy, and wanted fit men to carry on their ſchemes, gave them conſiderable offices; not imagining that they were encouraging a ſet of men, who would afterwards ſupplant them in their dignities and revenues*.

Originally the monks being ſubject to the biſhops, could do nothing without their conſent. They could not even chuſe their own abbots. But the election of an abbot being ſometimes appointed by their *inſtitutions* to be made by the monks of the community, they firſt obtained from the biſhops the power of chuſing their abbot according to the tenor of their conſtitu-

* Simon on Church Revenues, p. 35.

tions.

tions. Afterwards they ſometimes got from the biſhops exemptions from epiſcopal juriſdiction. But when the popes got the power of granting ſuch exemptions, they commonly gave, or ſold, to the monks as many of them as they pleaſed, ſo that their power grew with that of the popes*.

In the ſeventh century pope Zacharias granted to the monaſtery of mount Caſſin an exemption from all epiſcopal juriſdiction, ſo that it was ſubject to the pope only. Similar exemptions had been obtained in the preceding century, but they were very rare. In time they came to be univerſal, and were even extended to the chapters of regular cathedrals. In return for thoſe privileges, the monks were diſtinguiſhed by a boundleſs devotion to the ſee of Rome. Theſe abuſes were checked, but not effectually, by the councils of Conſtance and Trent†.

The firſt introduction of monks into holy orders, was by the permiſſion which they obtained to have prieſts of their own body, for the purpoſe of officiating in their monaſteries, to which there could be no great objection; it being for the convenience of the ſecular prieſts, themſelves, as well as of the monaſtery; and eſpecially as, with reſpect to qualification for the office, they were ſuperior to the prieſts themſelves. The firſt

* Simon on Church Revenues, p. 65. † Anecdotes, p. 298. 303.

privilege

privilege they obtained of this kind was from Boniface III. but their eccleſiaſtical power was completed, and made equal to that of the other clergy, by Boniface IV. in 606. They could then preach, baptize, hear confeſſions, abſolve, and do every thing that any prieſt could do. Upon this the monks began to be, in a great meaſure, independent of the biſhops, refuſing to ſubmit to their orders, on the pretence that they were contrary to their rules of diſcipline, and always appealing to the popes, who were ſure to decide in their favour.

The monks, beſides theology, ſtudied likewiſe the canon and civil laws, and alſo medicine; ſtudies which they began through charity, but which they continued for intereſt. They were therefore forbidden by Innocent II. in 1131, to ſtudy either civil law or medicine. But in the beginning of the following century they were allowed to be advocates for the regulars. Theſe things, ſays Fleury, brought them too much into the world*.

The clergy were ſoon aware of the encroachments of the monks, both upon their ſpiritual power, and upon their revenues. But the tide of popularity was ſo ſtrongly in their favour, that all attempts to withſtand it were in vain. At the

* Eighth Diſcourſe, p. 17.

council

council of Chalcedon it was ordered that the monks ſhould be wholly under the juriſdiction of the biſhops, and meddle with no affairs, civil or eccleſiaſtical, without their permiſſion. But this, and all other regulations for the ſame purpoſe, availed nothing, both the popes and the rich laity, favouring the monks. When Gregory VII. made a law to compel laymen, to reſtore whatever had been in the poſſeſſion of the church, ſuch reſtitutions were generally made either to the cathedral churches, were the clergy conformed to a regular monaſtic life or to the monaſteries, and ſeldom to thoſe pariſh churches to which the eſtates had originally belonged*.

In later times the endowments of monaſteries were equal, if not ſuperior, to thoſe of the churches; and the influence of the monks with the popes and the temporal princes being generally ſuperior to that of the clergy, they uſed, in many places, to claim the *tithes*, and other church dues. When churches depended upon monaſteries, they appointed monks to officiate in them, and appropriated the tithes to the uſe of the monaſtery. Alſo biſhops were often gained by the monks to ſuffer them to put vicars or curates into churches, which they pretended to depend upon monaſteries †; and in other reſpects alſo, they encroached upon the rights of the clergy.

* Simon on Church Revenues, p. 67. † Ib.

The monks having taken advantage of the ignorance of the ſecular prieſts, and having got the government of many churches committed to them, it was not eaſy to turn them out, and re-eſtabliſh the ſecular clergy in their places; and on this account there happened the greateſt conteſts between the canons and the monks, eſpecially in England; where the monks had deprived the canons of their canonſhips, and even obliged the ſecular prieſts to turn monks, if they would enjoy their benefices. All the archbiſhops of Canterbury had been monks from the time of that Auſtin whom Gregory ſent into England, to the reign of Henry I. But, at length, all the biſhops in England declared that they would have no monk for their primate; and by degrees they began to take the government of the church into their own hands *.

In the ninth century many monks were taken from the monaſteries, and even placed at the head of armies; and monks and abbots frequently diſcharged the functions of ambaſſadors, and miniſters of ſtate. For upon the very ſame account that the clergy in general were better qualified for theſe offices than laymen, viz. in point of learning and addreſs, the regular clergy had the advantage of the ſecular.

The monks, and eſpecially the mendicant orders, aſſumed ſo much, and got ſo much power

* Simon on Church Revenues, p. 74.

both

both ſpiritual and temporal into their hands, ſome time before the reformation, that all the biſhops, clergy, and univerſities in Europe were engaged in a violent oppoſition to them. And it was in this quarrel that the famous Wickliffe, firſt diſtinguiſhed himſelf, in 1360; and from thence he proceeded to attack the pontifical power itſelf.

Before the ſixth century there was no diſtinction of ordors among monks, but a monk in one place was received as a monk in any other. But afterwards they ſubdivided themſelves into ſocieties, altogether diſtinct from one another; and ſo far were they from conſidering all monks as friends and brothers, that they often entertained the moſt violent enmity againſt each other; eſpecially thoſe who formed themſelves on the ſame general plan, and afterwards divided from them on ſome trifling difference in cuſtoms or habits.

This diſtinction of orders began with Benedict of Nurſia, who in 529 inſtituted a new order of monks, which preſently made a moſt rapid progreſs in the Weſt; being particularly favoured by the church of Rome, to the intereſt of which it was greatly devoted. In the ninth century this order had ſwallowed up all the other denominations of monks *.

* Moſheim, vol. i. p. 449.

Notwithſtanding the extreme profligacy of the manners of many of theſe monks, their number and reputation would hardly be credible, but that the moſt authentic hiſtory bears teſtimony to it. What the number of them was in Egypt, at a very early period, has been mentioned already. Preſently afterwards, viz. in the fifth century, the monks are ſaid to have been ſo numerous, that large armies might have been raiſed out of them, without any ſenſible diminution of their body. And yet this was not to be compared to their numbers in later ages; and almoſt every century produced new ſpecies of them, and no age abounded more with them than that which immediately preceded the reformation*.

In the ſeventh century the heads of rich families were fond of devoting their children to this mode of life, and thoſe who had lived profligate lives generally made this their laſt refuge, and then left their eſtates to the monaſteries. This was deemed ſufficient to cancel all ſorts of crimes, and therefore the embracing of this way of life was generally termed a *ſecond baptiſm*.

In the eighth and ninth centuries, counts, dukes, and even kings, abandoned their honours, and ſhut themſelves up in monaſteries, under the notion of devoting themſelves entirely to God.

* Moſheim, vol. iii. p. 446, &c.

Several

Several examples of this fanatical extravagance were exhibited in Italy, France, Germany, Spain, and England. And others, repenting that they had not done this in time, put on the monaſtic habit on the approach of death, and choſe to be buried in it, that they might be conſidered as of the fraternity, and conſequently have the benefit of the prayers of that order.

This moſt abject ſuperſtition continued to the fifteenth century. For even then we find many perſons made it an eſſential part of their laſt wills, that their bodies ſhould be wrapped in old Dominican or Franciſcan habits, and be interred among the monks of thoſe orders*.

It is ſaid that in all the centuries of chriſtianity together, there were not ſo many foundations of monaſteries, both for men and women, or ſo rich and famous, as thoſe of the ſeventh and eighth centuries, eſpecially in France†. And when monaſteries were ſo much increaſed, we are not ſurprized to find complaints of the want of good diſcipline among them. Accordingly, in the ninth century, the morals of the monks were ſo bad, that ſome reformation was abſolutely neceſſary; and this was attempted by Benedict, abbot of Aniane, at the inſtance of Louis the Meek. He firſt reformed the monaſteries of Aquitaine,

* Moſheim, vol. iii. p. 164. † Sueur, A. D. 720.

and then thoſe of all France, reducing all the monks, without exception, to the rule of the famous Benedict of Mount Caſſin. This diſcipline continued in force a certain time, but the effect of it was extinct in leſs than a century. The ſame emperor alſo favoured the order of Canons, diſtributing them through all the provinces of his empire. He alſo inſtituted an order of *Canoneſſes*, which Moſheim ſays was the firſt female convent in the chriſtian world*.

In the tenth century the monkiſh diſcipline, which had been greatly decayed, was again revived in ſome meaſure by the authority of Odo biſhop of Clugny, whoſe rules were adopted by all the weſtern kingdoms in Chriſtendom. Thus we find ſucceſſive periods of reformation in the diſcipline of monaſteries. But no ſooner was the new and more auſtere kinds of monks eſtabliſhed, and got rich, than they became as diſſolute as their predeceſſors, which called for another revolution in their affairs; and theſe ſucceſſive periods of rigour and of diſſoluteneſs continued quite down to the reformation.

One of the firſt great cauſes of this relaxation of diſcipline in the monaſteries, was the invaſion of the Normans, whoſe ravages fell chiefly upon the monaſteries. For upon this, the monks be-

* Moſheim, vol. ii. p. 128. 130.

ing

ing diſperſed, and aſſembling where and how they could, the obſervance of their rules was impoſſible, and many irregularities were introduced. Something of the ſame kind was the conſequence of the great plague in Europe, in 1348, when many of the monks died, and the remainder diſperſed; and having lived for ſome time without any regard to their rules, they could not without difficulty be brought to them again.

A more general cauſe of the relaxation of diſcipline among all the orders of the monks, as Bernard obſerved, was their exemption from epiſcopal juriſdiction*.

Another cauſe of the relaxation of their diſcipline, was the multiplication of prayers and ſinging of pſalms; for they had added many to thoſe preſcribed by Benedict. This, ſays Fleury, left them no time for labour, of which Benedict had ordered ſeven hours every day. This contempt of bodily labour was introduced by the northern nations, who were addicted to hunting and war, but deſpiſed agriculture and the arts †. Mental prayer, he adds, has been much boaſted of by the monks for the laſt five hundred years. It is, ſays he, an idle and equivocal exerciſe, and produced at length the error of the Beghards and Beguines, which was condemned at the councils of Vienna‡. The original monks, he ſays, were a very different

* Fleury's eighth Diſcourſe, p. 37. † Ib. p. 13. ‡ Ib. p. 44. 45.

kind of men, and their diſcipline much more proper to produce a real mortification to the world, and to ſuppreſs inordinate affections. Theirs was a life of contemplation and labour, by which they chiefly ſupported themſelves. The antient monks had no hair cloths, or chains, and there was no mention of diſcipline or flagellation among them *.

Bodily labour, this writer obſerves, was likewiſe excluded by the introduction of *lay brothers* into monaſteries, and this was another means of the corruption of their manners, the monks being the maſters, and the lay brothers being conſidered as ſlaves, and an order of perſons much below them, and ſubſervient to them. John Gualbert was the firſt who inſtituted lay brothers, in his monaſtery of Valombroſe, founded about 1040. To thoſe lay brothers were preſcribed a certain number of *pater noſters*, at each of their canonical hours; and that they might acquit themſelves of this duty without any omiſſion or miſtake, carried grains of corn, or ſtrings, whence came the uſe of *chaplets*. The ſame diſtinction, he ſays, was afterwards carried into nunneries, though there was no pretence for it †.

The monaſtic orders being almoſt all wealthy and diſſolute in the thirteenth century, the *mendicant* or *begging friars*, who abſolutely diſclaimed

* Fleury's Eighth Diſcourſe, p. 6. † Ib. p. 15.

all

all property, were then eſtabliſhed by Innocent III. and patronized by ſucceeding pontiffs. Theſe increaſed ſo amazingly, that they became a burthen both to the people and to the church itſelf; and at length they were the occaſion of much greater diſorders than thoſe which they were introduced to redreſs.

There is a remarkable reſemblance, as Middleton obſerves, between theſe mendicant friars and the mendicant prieſts among the pagans. The mendicant prieſts among the heathens, he ſays, who uſed to travel from houſe to houſe with ſacks on their backs, and from an opinion of their ſanctity raiſed contributions of money, &c. for the ſupport of their *fraternities*, were the pictures of the begging friars, who are always about the ſtreets in the ſame habits, and on the ſame errands, and never fail to carry home with them a good ſack full of proviſions for the uſe of their convent*.

Notwithſtanding theſe diſorders, it muſt be acknowledged that the mendicant friars were inſtituted with the very beſt intention, and that they had for a conſiderable time a very good effect. St. Francis, the founder of this order, thought his inſtitute, by which he forbad his monks the uſe of gold, ſilver, or any kind of property, the pure goſpel; and it was of uſe, as Fleury ob-

* Middleton's Letters, p. 220.

ſerves,

ſerves, in a very corrupt age to recall the idea of charity and ſimple chriſtianity, and to ſupply the defect of ordinary paſtors; the greater part of whom were then ignorant or negligent, and many corrupt and ſcandalous *.

The monks of the antient religious orders fell into great contempt after the introduction of the Mendicants, who filled the chairs in ſchools and churches, and by their labours ſupplied the negligence and incapacity of the prieſts and other paſtors. But this contempt excited the emulation of the other orders, and made them apply to matters of literature †.

Afterwards the mendicant friars, on the pretence of *charity*, meddled with all affairs, public and private. They undertook the execution of wills, and they even accepted of deputations to negotiate peace between cities and princes. The popes frequently employed them, as perſons intirely devoted to them, and who travelled at a ſmall expence; and ſometimes they made uſe of them in raiſing money. But what diverted them the moſt from their proper profeſſion was the buſineſs of the *inquiſition*. By undertaking to manage this court, they were transformed into magiſtrates, with guards and treaſures at their diſpoſal, and became terrible to every body ‡.

* Eighth Diſcourſe, p. 21. † Ib. p. 32. ‡ Ib. p. 27.

During

During three centuries the two fraternities of mendicants, the Dominicans and the Franciſcans, governed with an almoſt univerſal and abſolute ſway both church and ſtate, and maintained the prerogative of the Roman pontiff, againſt kings, biſhops, and heretics, with incredible ardor and ſucceſs. They were in thoſe times what the Jeſuits were afterwards, the life and ſoul of the whole hierarchy. Among other prerogatives, the popes empowered them to preach, to hear confeſſions, and to pronounce abſolutions, without any licence from the biſhops, and even without conſulting them. The Franciſcans had the chief management of the ſale of indulgences, and the Dominicans directed the inquiſition.

The amazing credit of religious orders in general, and the reputation of their founders, made many perſons ambitious of diſtinguiſhing themſelves in the ſame way; and though the council of Lateran, in 1215, forbad the introduction of any more *new religions*, as they were called, the decree, as Fleury ſays, was ill obſerved. For more were eſtabliſhed in the two centuries following, than in all the preceding *.

Beſides the monks and regulars, there is another ſort of religious perſons, who, according to their inſtitution, bear the name of St. John of

* Eighth Diſcourſe, p. 20.

Jeruſalem,

Jeruſalem, from whom are deſcended the knights of Malta; and ſimilar to them were the knights Templars, and the knights of the Teutonic order. Theſe orders had their origin in the time of the cruſades, and their firſt object was to take care of the ſick and wounded, and afterwards to defend them. But they diſtinguiſhed themſelves ſo much in their military capacity, that the order was ſoon filled with men of a military turn, and at length they were moſt depended upon for any military ſervice. Thus, from their undertaking the defence of their hoſpital, they undertook the defence of the Holy Land, and by degrees that of other chriſtian countries againſt all Mahometan powers. The knights of St. John were eſtabliſhed in 1090, and being driven from the Holy Land, they retired to Cyprus, then to Rhodes, and they are now ſettled at Malta.

The knights templars were eſtabliſhed in 1118, taking their name from their firſt houſe which ſtood near the temple in Jeruſalem. This order grew very rich and powerful, but withal ſo exceedingly vicious, and it is ſaid atheiſtical, that, becoming obnoxious in France, Italy, and Spain, the pope was compelled to aboliſh the order in 1312.

Other orders of knighthood, which had ſomething of religion in their inſtitution, were formed in ſeveral parts of Europe, whence aroſe what

are

are called *Commanderies*, which were originally the office of taking care of the revenues belonging to the military orders, in diſtant places. The members of ſome of theſe orders may marry, and yet enjoy, under the title of *Commanders*, the church lands that are appropriated to their order. Philip II. of Spain was, in this ſenſe, the greateſt prelate in the church, next to the pope; becauſe he was the great maſter of the three military orders of Spain, and enjoyed a good part of the tithe of the church within his territories. The king of Spain, F. Simon ſays, may always be the richeſt beneficiary in his kingdom; and by appropriating to his own uſe the revenues of his commanderies alone, may have enough to live like a king *.

It may not be improper to add, in this place that after the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, many of the Latins remained ſtill in Syria; and retreating into the receſſes of mount Libanus, lived in a ſavage manner, and by degrees loſt all ſenſe both of religion and humanity †.

The laſt order of a religious kind, of which I think it of any conſequence to give an account, is that of the *Jeſuits*, which was inſtituted by Ignatius Loyola, and confirmed by the pope, with a view to heal the wounds which the church

* On Church Revenues, p. 234. † Moſheim, vol. iii. p. 1, 2.

of

of Rome had received by the reformation, and to ſupply the place of the monks, and eſpecially that of the mendicants, who were then ſunk into contempt. The Jeſuits held a middle rank between the monks and the ſecular clergy, and approached pretty nearly to the regular canons. They all took an oath, by which they bound themſelves to go, without deliberation or delay, wherever the pope ſhould think fit to ſend them. The ſecrets of this ſociety were not known to all the Jeſuits, nor even to all thoſe who were called *profeſſed members*, and were diſtinguiſhed from thoſe who were called *ſcholars*, but only to a few of the oldeſt of them, and thoſe who were approved by long experience. The court and church of Rome derived more aſſiſtance from this ſingle order, than from all their other emiſſaries and miniſters, by their application to learning, engaging in controverſy, and preaching in diſtant countries, but more eſpecially by their conſummate ſkill in civil tranſactions, and getting to themſelves almoſt the whole buſineſs of *confeſſion* to crowned heads, and perſons of eminence in the ſtate; a buſineſs which had before been engroſſed by the Dominicans.

The moral maxims of this ſociety were ſo dangerous and ſo obnoxious to the temporal princes (added to the temptation of the wealth of which they were poſſeſſed) that being charged with many intrigues and crimes of ſtate, they were

were baniſhed, and had their effects confiſcated, firſt in Portugal, then in Spain, and afterwards in France; and at length the pope was obliged to aboliſh the whole order.

I ſhall conclude this article with ſome particulars that lead us to think unfavourably, and others that may incline us to think more favourably of monks in general.

The religious orders in general have been the great ſupport of the papal power, and of all the ſuperſtitions of the church of Rome, in all ages. The worſhip of ſaints, and the ſuperſtitious veneration for relics were chiefly promoted by their aſſiduity, in proclaiming their virtues every where, and publiſhing accounts of miracles wrought by them, and of revelations in their favour. They were alſo the great venders of indulgences, the founders of the inquiſition, and the great inſtrument of the papal perſecutions. The licentiouſneſs of the monks was become proverbial ſo early as the fifth century, and they are ſaid in thoſe times, to have excited tumults and ſeditions in various places.

In ſome periods the monks, having an unlimited licence to buy and ſell, exerciſed their permiſſion with ſo little ſcruple, that it encouraged many great men to uſurp the eſtates of their neighbours; being ſure to find purchaſers among the

the monks. F. Simon relates an inſtance in the abbey of *Mire* in Switzerland, in which the monk who compiled the acts of the monaſtery, gives a liſt of things which were acquired by unjuſt means, without the leaſt hint of any obligation to make reſtitution *.

Nothing could exceed the inſolence and arrogance of the Dominicans and Franciſcans. They even declared publicly, that they had a divine impulſe and commiſſion to illuſtrate and maintain the religion of Jeſus Chriſt, that the true method of ſalvation was revealed to them alone; and they boaſted of their familiar connection with the Supreme Being, the virgin Mary, and the ſaints in glory. By theſe means they gained ſuch an aſcendancy over the common people, that theſe would truſt no other but the mendicants with the care of their ſouls †.

St. Francis imprinted upon himſelf five wounds, ſimilar to thoſe of our Saviour, which his followers aſſerted were given him by Chriſt himſelf; and in this they were encouraged by the mandates of the popes, and by ſeveral bulls enjoining the belief of it. They even approved and recommended an impious treatiſe entitled *The book of the conformities of St. Francis*, compoſed in 1383 by a Franciſcan of Piſa, in which this ſaint is put on a level with Chriſt ‡.

* On Church Revenues, p. 56. † Moſheim, vol. iii. p. 61.
‡ Ib. p. 169

The

The Carmelites impoſed upon the credulous by aſſerting that the virgin Mary appeared to the general of their order, and gave him a ſolemn promiſe that the ſouls of all thoſe who left the world with the Carmelite cloke or ſcapulary upon their ſhoulders, ſhould be infallibly preſerved from eternal damnation; and this impudent fiction found patrons and defenders among the pontiffs. Even the late pope Benedict XIV. who is generally eſteemed the moſt candid and ſenſible of all the popes, is an advocate for this groſs impoſition *.

It muſt, however, be acknowledged, that notwithſtanding the great miſchief that has been done to the chriſtian world by the religious orders, they have, both directly and indirectly, been the occaſion of ſome good; and though they were the chief ſupport of the papal power, they nevertheleſs contributed ſomething to the diminution of it, and to the reformation.

Such places as monaſteries originally were, though they were abuſed by many, muſt have been a very deſirable retreat to many others, in times of war and confuſion. And the opportunity of leiſure and meditation, with a total excluſion from the world muſt have been of great uſe to thoſe who had been too much immerſed in the

* Moſheim, vol. iii. p. 61.

buſtle and the vices of it. For notwithſtanding the irregularities with which monks in general were perhaps juſtly charged, there muſt have been in all ages, great numbers who conſcientiouſly conformed to the rules of them.

There is no period, perhaps, in which the ſtate of chriſtianity, and of Europe in general, wore a more unfavourable aſpect than in the fourteenth century, during the reſidence of the popes at Avignon; and yet Petrarch, who lived in that age, and who makes heavy and repeated complaints of the vices of it, and eſpecially of the extreme profligacy of the court of Rome, appears to have had a good opinion of the ſtate of many of the monaſteries; and his own brother, who had been rather diſſolute in his youth, retired to one of them in the very flower of his age; and became truly exemplary for his piety, humanity, and other virtues; which were eſpecially conſpicuous during the great plague. Indeed the general credit of the order in all ages cannot be accounted for on any other ſuppoſition, than that, as things then ſtood, they were, upon the whole, really uſeful.

Another capital advantage which the chriſtian world always derived from the monks, and which we enjoy to this day, is the uſe they were of to literature in general, both on account of the monaſteries being the principal repoſitories of books, and the monks the copiers of them, and becauſe,

becauſe, almoſt from their firſt inſtitution, the monks had a greater ſhare of knowledge than the ſecular clergy. In the ſeventh century the little learning there was in Europe, was, in a manner, confined to the monaſteries, many of the monks being obliged by their rules to devote certain hours every day to ſtudy; when the ſchools which had been committed to the care of the biſhops were gone to ruin*.

A very reſpectable religious fraternity was founded in the fifteenth century, confirmed by the council of Conſtance called *the brethren and clerks of common life.* The ſchools erected by this fraternity acquired great reputation. From them iſſued Eraſmus of Rotterdam, and other eminent perſons †.

The cauſe of literature has alſo been much indebted to the Jeſuits, and more lately to the Benedictines; the members of both theſe orders having produced many works of great erudition and labour, and having employed the revenues of their ſocieties to defray the expence of printing them.

As a proof of the monaſtic orders having contributed ſomething to the reformation, it may be ſufficient to adduce the following facts. The

* Moſheim, vol. ii. p. 13. † Ib. vol. iii. p. 254.

Dominicans and Franciſcans ſoon quarrelled about pre-eminence, and they differed exceedingly amongſt themſelves; and theſe differences among the mendicant orders, as well as the diviſions of the popedom, and the mutual excommunication of the popes and anti-popes, gave ſeveral mortal blows to the authority of the church of Rome, and excited in the minds of men a moſt ardent deſire of reformation *.

The Fratricelli, or Fratres Minores, were monks who, in the ſame thirteenth century, ſeparated themſelves from the community of St. Francis, with a view to obſerve his rule more ſtrictly. They went about cloathed in loathſome rags, declaiming in all places againſt the corruptions of the church of Rome, and the vices of the popes and biſhops. Theſe were perſecuted with the utmoſt virulence by the other Franciſcans, who were countenanced by the popes, and they continued in this violent ſtate of war with the church of Rome till the reformation, multitudes of them periſhing in the flames of the inquiſition. Theſe rebellious Franciſcans, therefore, deſerve an eminent rank among thoſe who prepared the way for the reformation, exciting in the minds of the people a juſt averſion to the church of Rome in its then very corrupt ſtate †.

* Moſheim, vol. iii. p. 62. † Ib. p. 75.

The

The original difference of theſe monks with the pope was perhaps the moſt trifling and abſurd that can well be imagined, viz. the property of the things that were conſumed by them, as bread and other proviſions; they maintaining that they had not the *property*, but only the *uſe* of them. This diſpute was at firſt confined to the monks themſelves, but at length the popes interpoſed, and John XXII. declaring that obedience is the principal virtue of monks, and preferable to poverty, they aſſerted the contrary, maintaining that they ought not to obey their ſuperiors, when they commanded any thing contrary to perfection. John condemning theſe refractory monks, they declared him a heretic by his own authority. They even went ſo far as to call him *Antichriſt*, and to appeal from his conſtitution to a future council. At length the revolt went ſo far, that the monks, ſupported by the emperor Lewis of Bavaria, pronounced ſentence of depoſition againſt the pope, and ſet up another in his place *.

Since the fifteenth century, in the beginning of which the diſcipline of the monks was exceedingly relaxed, various reformations have been made, which Mr. Fleury ſays, has raiſed the credit of moſt of the orders †. But notwithſtanding theſe reforms, and though nothing is now objected to them with reſpect to the obſervance of their

* Fleury's eighth Diſcourſe, p. 30. Moſheim, vol. iii. p. 74.
† Eighth Diſcourſe, p. 47.

rules, they are found to be of ſo little uſe in the preſent ſtate of ſociety, that it ſeems to be the determination of moſt of the catholic powers to aboliſh them by degrees; as appears by the regulations that have been made reſpecting the time of admiſſion, making it ſo late in life, that very few will not be ſo far engaged in other purſuits, as to have no inducement to become monks or nuns; and the authority of parents, who often found it convenient to diſpoſe of their younger children in this way, is now generally ſet aſide. In conſequence of this, and other cauſes, which have been operating more ſilently ever ſince the reformation, the religious houſes are in general but thinly inhabited. Some of their revenues have already been diverted to other uſes, and ſuch is the aſpect of things at preſent, and the wants of the ſeveral potentates of Europe, that it is juſtly to be apprehended, that all the reſt will ſoon ſhare the ſame fate.

THE

HISTORY

OF THE

Corruptions of Chriſtianity.

PART XIII.

The Hiſtory of CHURCH REVENUES.

THE INTRODUCTION.

IN the preceding parts of this work we have taken a view of the changes which, in the courſe of time, have taken place with reſpect to the rank and character of *chriſtian miniſters*; by what ſteps it came to paſs, that, from having no authority whatever, beſides what their greater virtue or ability gave them, and eſpecially from having no dominion over the faith of their fellow chriſtians, the authority of the biſhops, with reſpect to articles of faith, as well as matters of diſcipline and worſhip, came to be abſolute and deſpotic; and how, from living in a ſtate of the

moſt ſubmiſſive ſubjection to all the temporal powers of the world, and keeping as far as poſſible from interfering in all civil affairs, they came to be temporal princes and ſovereigns themſelves, and to controul all the temporal princes of Europe, even in the exerciſe of their civil power. In this part I ſhall exhibit a ſimilar view of the changes which have taken place with reſpect to the *revenues of the church*; and ſhall ſhew by what ſteps miniſters of the goſpel, from living on the alms of chriſtian ſocieties, together with the poor that belonged to them, came to have independent and even princely incomes, and to engroſs to themſelves a very conſiderable part of the wealth and even of the landed property of Europe.

SECTION I.

The Hiſtory of Church Revenues, to the Fall of the Weſtern Empire.

IN the conſtitution of the primitive church the apoſtles followed the cuſtom of the Jewiſh ſynagogues, the members of which contributed every week what they could ſpare, and entruſted it with thoſe who diſtributed alms. Like the Jews alſo, the chriſtians ſent alms to diſtant places, and gave to thoſe who came from a diſtance with proper recommendations. They

They were ſo liberal upon theſe occaſions, that Lucian ſays, that to become rich in a ſhort time, a man had nothing to do but to pretend to be a chriſtian. In thoſe times both alms and ſtipends were often called *honoraries*. Thus when Paul bid Timothy *honour widows that are widows indeed*, he means rewarding them for diſcharging particular offices, which in thoſe days widows held in churches. So alſo the phraſe *worthy of double honour* ſignifies worthy of a double, or a larger reward.

The church had no other revenues beſides theſe voluntary alms till the time of Conſtantine. Indeed before that time the chriſtian churches were conſidered as unlawful aſſemblies, and therefore could no more acquire property, than the Jewiſh ſynagogues, or other communities not authorized by the ſtate; though in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, the ſenate permitting any perſon to give whatever he pleaſed to communities *already formed*, the church began, in the third century, by toleration or connivance, to poſſeſs eſtates. But under Conſtantine chriſtian churches were conſidered as reſpectable ſocieties, and from that time they began to grow rich. In 321 this emperor made an edict, addreſſed to the people of Rome, by which he gave all perſons the liberty of leaving by will to the churches, and eſpecially that of Rome, whatever they pleaſed. He alſo ordained that what had been taken from the churches

churches in the perſecution of Diocleſian ſhould be reſtored to them, and that the eſtates of the martyrs who had no heirs, ſhould be given to the churches *.

By this means, in time, all churches had what was called their *patrimony*, and that of Rome in the ſixth century had a very great one, not only in Italy, but in other countries; and to inſpire a greater reſpect for theſe patrimonies, they were denominated by the ſaints that were moſt reſpected in each particular church. Thus the territories belonging to the church of Rome were called the patrimony of St. Peter. But theſe patrimonies were, like other eſtates, ſubject to the laws of the countries in which they were†.

Though the biſhops and prieſts had originally no property of their own, but lived upon the ſtock of the church, Cyprian complains that ſome of them, in his time, not content with a ſubſiſtence in common, began to live in ſeparate houſes of their own, and to have each their allowance paid in money, daily, monthly, or for a longer time, and this was ſoon tolerated. And whereas part of the church ſtock had always been given to the poor, the clergy began to encroach upon this part and to appropriate it almoſt wholly to themſelves. That part alſo which uſed to be

* Anecdotes, p. 129. 131. † Ib. p. 231.

employed

employed in the repairs of churches, &c. was intercepted in the ſame manner.

All the civil affairs of chriſtian ſocieties were at firſt managed by deacons, but the diſpoſal of money, as well as of every thing elſe, was in the power of the preſbyters, by whoſe general directions the deacons acted; and the biſhops having encroached upon the preſbyters in other things, did not neglect to avail themſelves of their authority with reſpect to the temporalities of the church. And ſo great was the confidence which the primitive chriſtians repoſed in their biſhops (and with reaſon, no doubt, at firſt) that they alone were allowed to ſuperintend the diſtribution of the common church ſtock to the inferior clergy, as well as to the poor, according to the merits or occaſions of each individual. But in conſequence, probably, of ſome abuſe of this diſcretionary power, we find afterwards, that not the biſhop alone, but the whole body of the preſbyters made that diſtribution. Still, however, it cannot but be ſuppoſed that, the biſhops having ſuperior influence, more would be in their power in this reſpect, than in that of the preſbyters; and theſe, being ſubject to the biſhops in other things, would not chuſe to diſoblige them in this.

We do find, however, that when churches grew very rich, the biſhops often embezzled the eſtates belonging to them. This evil grew to ſo great

the church revenues into four parts, of one was for the biſhop, another for the reſt clergy, the third for the poor, and the for repairs, or probably a kind of *church* o defray any contingent expences.

his diſtribution of the church ſtock was the of great animoſities and contentions between ſhops and the inferior clergy, in which the were often obliged to interpoſe with their and authority; and Father Simon aſcribes noſt of the diſorders which aroſe in the n church; the eaſtern, where that partition ever made, being free from them. For no diviſion was made, the idea of the pro- being in the whole ſociety continued, and uently the clergy were conſidered as the s and beneficiaries of the ſociety at large. at partition made them abſolute maſters of eſpective ſhares, and gave them independent ty; and riches and independence have never avourable to virtue with the bulk of man- or the bulk of any order of men whatever.

it thoſe corruptions of the clergy which rom the riches of the church began to be pe- y conſpicuous, when, after the time of Con- e, the church came to be poſſeſſed of fixed ge revenues. Jerom ſays, that the church

* Simon on Church Revenues, p. 20, 21.

had

had indeed become more rich and powerful under the chriſtian emperors, but leſs virtuous; and Chryſoſtom ſays that the biſhops forſook their employments to ſell their corn and wine, and to look after their glebes and farms, beſides ſpending much time in law ſuits. Auſtin was very ſenſible of this, and often refuſed inheritances left to his church, giving them to the lawful heir, and he would never make any purchaſes for the uſe of his church *. Jerom ſays that the prieſts of his time ſpared no tricks or artifices to get the eſtates of private perſons; and he mentions many low and ſordid offices, to which prieſts and monks ſtooped, in order to get the favour and the eſtates of old men and women, who had no children †.

The diſorders of the clergy muſt have been very great in the time of Jerom, ſince the emperors were then obliged to make many laws to reſtrain them. In 370 Valentinian made a law to put a ſtop to the avarice of the clergy, forbidding prieſts and monks to receive any thing, either by gift or will, from widows, virgins, or any women. Twenty years after he made another law, to forbid deaconeſſes to give or bequeath their effects to the clergy, or the monks, or to make the churches their heirs; but Theodoſius revoked that edict ‡. We may form ſome idea of the riches of the church of Rome towards the middle of the third

* Simon on Church Revenues, p. 17. † Ib. p. 27. 28.
‡ Anecdotes, p. 133. &c.

century,

century, from this circumſtance, that in that time, according to Euſebius, it maintained one thouſand five hundred perſons, widows, orphans, and poor; and it had then forty-ſix prieſts, beſides the biſhop and other officers*.

The Hiſtory of Church Revenues after the Fall of the Weſtern Empire.

UPON the invaſion of the Roman empire by the Norman nations, both the eccleſiaſtical laws and revenues underwent a great alteration, and upon the whole very favourable to the church, as a political ſyſtem, though for ſome time, and in ſome caſes, it was unfavourable to the clergy. For theſe ſavage conquerors made little diſtinction between the goods of the church and other property, but diſtributed both as they thought proper, even to laymen; and children often ſucceeded to their fathers in church livings, as well as in other eſtates. Alſo many eſtates belonging to churches were transferred to monaſteries.

About this time, however, began the cuſtom of granting eſtates to eccleſiaſtical perſons in the

* Hiſt. Lib. vi. Cap. 43. p. 312.

ſame

ſame manner, and upon the ſame terms, as they had been granted to laymen, viz. for the lives of particular biſhops or abbots, as we find about the year 500, under pope Symmachus, but afterwards to the churches and monaſteries in general; the eccleſiaſtics ſwearing fealty and allegiance for them, and rendering the ſame ſervices that the lay lords rendered for their eſtates. Hence the term *benefice* came to be applied to church livings. For that term was originally applied to eſtates granted to laymen upon condition of military ſervice.

In no part of the world were the clergy ſo great gainers by this ſyſtem as in Germany, where whole principalities were given to churches and monaſteries; whereby biſhops became, in all reſpects, independent ſovereign princes, as they are at this day. This was chiefly the effect of the liberality of the emperors of the name of Otho. Churchmen, both biſhops and abbots, being at this time principally employed in all the great affairs of ſtate, it was not difficult for them to obtain whatever they deſired of princes.

In thoſe times of confuſion, when property in land, and every thing elſe, was very precarious, many perſons choſe to make over the property of their eſtates to churches and monaſteries, obtaining from them a leaſe for ſeveral lives. The property being in the church, it was held more ſacred,

eſpecially

eſpecially after the entire ſettlement of the northern nations in the weſtern part of the Roman empire, and when the rage of conqueſt was over. In theſe circumſtances a leaſe for a few lives, on an eaſy rent, was of more value to individuals than the abſolute property.

The poſſeſſion of benefices was attended, however, with one incumbrance, from which the church did not very ſoon free itſelf. According to the antient feudal laws, when a tenant died, the lord enjoyed the revenues till his ſucceſſor was inveſted, and had ſworn fealty; and it was natural that this law ſhould affect churchmen as well as laymen. This, however, interfered with the antient cuſtom of the church. For during the vacancy of a biſhoprick, the profits were uſually managed by the clergy and archdeacons, for the uſe of the future biſhop. But after the general collation of benefices, the princes firſt demanded the revenues of thoſe eſtates which they had granted to the church, and afterwards of all church livings without diſtinction, and this was called *regale*. This right of regale was not ſettled in France in the third race of their kings*, and was probably firſt eſtabliſhed upon the agreement between pope Calixtus and the emperor Henry†.

Lewis the Young is the firſt king of France, who mentions the right of regale, in the year

* Simon on Church Revenues, p. 94. † Ib. p. 98.

1161. And we find in the hiſtory of England, that this right of regale was eſtabliſhed in this kingdom at the ſame time that it was in France, and that it occaſioned many troubles here*.

By degrees, however, the eſtates which had been long in the poſſeſſion of the clergy began to be conſidered as ſo much theirs, and the temper of the times was ſo favourable to the claims of the church, that it was thought wrong for laymen to meddle with any part of it; and many princes were induced to relinquiſh the right of regale. The emperor Frederic II. remitted this right to the church, as if it had been an uſurpation; and ſeveral councils prohibited princes and other laymen from invading the goods and revenues of churchmen after their death †.

Afterwards, however, when the popes uſurped the nomination to eccleſiaſtical benefices, they thought proper to claim what had been the *regale*, or the value of one year's income (for to that it had been reduced, as a medium of what had been due to the lord during a vacancy) and then this perquiſite was called *annates*. This claim is ſaid to have been firſt made by pope Urban VI. and was paid both in England and throughout the weſtern part of Chriſtendom ‡, In this country the annates were transferred to the crown in the

* Simon on Church Revenues, p. 98. † Ib. p. 100.
‡ Hiſt. of Popery, vol. iv. p. 37.

reign

reign of Henry VIII. and ſo they continue to this day, except that ſmall livings were releaſed from this burthen in the reign of queen Anne.

On account of the benefit accruing to the popes from theſe annates, they encouraged reſignations and the changing of livings among the clergy. For upon every event of this nature this tax to themſelves became due. Originally reſignations were made abſolutely, into the hands of thoſe who had a right to diſpoſe of the benefice, and when it appeared that there was no lawful reaſon for the reſignation, it was not admitted. But afterwards reſignations were made *in favorem*, or upon condition that the benefice ſhould go to ſome perſon in whoſe favour it was made, and with whom a contract had been made for that purpoſe. This cuſtom is ſo new, that no mention is made of it in the canon law, the Decretals, or the Sext. The new canoniſt called the contract a ſimoniacal one, and therefore there is a neceſſity for the pope to grant a diſpenſation for it, he being above all canon and poſitive law. Nothing derogated more from the right of ordinaries and patrons than theſe reſignations *in favorem*; for by this means they who poſſeſſed benefices diſpoſed of them as of their own inheritance. By this means they even deſcended in families *.

Another deduction from the value of livings the clergy ſuffered by the popes claiming the

* Simon on Church Revenues, p. 239.

tenth of their value, which was done about the ſame time that annates were demanded. This they did upon the pretence that the high prieſt among the Jews had a tenth of the tithes which were paid to the other prieſts. Another pretence for making this exaction aroſe from the Cruſades. The contributions of thoſe who did not ſerve in perſon being caſual, the popes impoſed a tax upon all eccleſiaſtical revenues, and the firſt of the kind was on the occaſion of the loſs of Jeruſalem. Afterwards the popes pretended to a right of diſpoſing of all eccleſiaſtical goods, and ſometimes demanded a twentieth, and even a tenth of their revenues, for other purpoſes beſides the Cruſades. They alſo made them over to the kings, who by this means ſhared with the popes in the plunder of the people*. This tenth the popes obtained occaſionally in England from the time of Edward I. when the demand was firſt made. In the twenty-ſixth of Henry VIII. an act was made to annex theſe tenths to the crown for ever: but they were given to the poor clergy towards an augmentation of their maintenance by queen Anne, and at the ſame time all ſmall livings were diſcharged from paying them.

The holy wars in the eleventh century were the cauſe of great acceſſions of wealth to the church. Moſt of the knights made their wills before their departure, and never failed to leave a conſiderable ſhare of their poſſeſſions to the

* Fleury's ſixth Diſcourſe, p. 19.

church;

church; and they built churches and monaſteries with ample endowments at their return, by way of thankſgiving for their preſervation: ſo that whether they returned or not, the church generally received ſome permanent advantage from the expedition.

One of the moſt valuable acquiſitions to the revenues of the church, but from the nature of it the moſt impolitic in various reſpects, and the moſt burthenſome to the ſtate is that of *tithes*. It is a great diſcouragement to the improvement of land, that a tenth part of the clear produce, without any deduction for the advanced expence of raiſing that produce, ſhould go from the cultivator of the land to any other perſon whatever. It would be far better to lay an equivalent tax upon all eſtates, cultivated or not cultivated. For then it would operate as a motive to induſtry; whereas the preſent mode of taxation is a diſcouragement to it. Beſides, this method of paying the miniſter is a continual ſource of diſpute between the clergy and the pariſhioners, which is of a moſt pernicious nature; making the people conſider as enemies thoſe whom they ought to reſpect as their beſt friends, and in whom they ought to repoſe the greateſt confidence.

The original reaſon for the payment of tithes was the moſt groundleſs imaginable, as it aroſe from conſidering chriſtian miniſters as an order

of men who ſucceeded to the rights of the *prieſts* under the Jewiſh law. This idea was obſerved to prevail very much about the time of the utter deſolation of Judea under Adrian. But it was a long time before there was any idea of claiming thoſe tithes as a right. Even the Jews acknowledge that no tithes were paid by themſelves after the deſtruction of the temple. But about the fifth century laws being made by the emperor, by which the tenth part of the mines and quarries were paid to themſelves, and the lords of the ſoil; there aroſe a cuſtom, as ſome ſay, of paying tithes to the church, which in time became general; till from the force of example, the omiſſion of it was deemed reproachful, and the clergy began to claim them as due to themſelves by the law of Moſes.

For ſome centuries, however, it was uſual to give tithes to the poor, and for other charitable purpoſes. Thus at a council of Macon, in 586, it was ordered that a tenth part of the fruits of the earth ſhould be brought into ſacred places, to be employed for the relief of the poor, and the redemption of captives*. By degrees, however, the clergy excluded the poor, and appropriated the tithes to themſelves. And about the year 600, tithes, from being eſtabliſhed as a cuſtom, became in ſome inſtances, *legal rights*; becauſe many eſtates were bequeathed with an obliga-

* Sueur.

tion

tion to pay tithes to particular churches. When theſe tithes were left to diſtant churches, the prieſts of the pariſh in which the eſtate lay uſed to complain; and at length in the reign of king John, the pope made a law, ordering that all tithes ſhould be paid to the pariſh prieſt, and after ſome time they were levied by law in all pariſhes without exception. At the reformation, though thoſe who took the lead in it were ſincerely diſpoſed to aboliſh tithes, they found themſelves obliged to continue, and to ſecure them by act of parliament, in order to conciliate the minds of the popiſh clergy. Thus this moſt intolerable evil continues to this day, whereas in other proteſtant countries, and eſpecially in Holland, the civil magiſtrates have adopted a wiſer plan, by allowing their miniſters a fixed ſtipend, paid out of the public funds.

The progreſs of ſuperſtition in the dark ages ſupplied many reſources for the augmentation of the wealth of the clergy. In thoſe times the world was made to believe that by virtue of a number of maſſes, the recitation of which might be purchaſed with money, and eſpecially with permanent endowments to churches and monaſteries, ſouls might be redeemed out of purgatory; and ſcenes of viſions and apparitions, ſometimes of ſouls in torment, and ſometimes of ſouls delivered from torment, were publiſhed in all places. Theſe had ſo wonderful an effect that in two or

three centuries church endowments increaſed to ſuch a degree, that if the ſcandals of the clergy on the one hand, and the ſtatutes of mortmain on the other, had not reſtrained the profuſeneſs that mankind had been wrought up to on this account, it is not eaſy to imagine how far it might have gone, perhaps to the entire ſubjection of the temporality, as Burnet ſays, to the ſpirituality *. And it was carefully inculcated by the prieſts, that rights acquired to the church belonged to God, and therefore could not be taken away without ſacrilege.

It was the fate of this country to ſuffer more from papal uſurpations than almoſt any other part of Chriſtendom. One tax to the church of Rome was peculiar to this country, which was *Peter pence*, or a tax of a penny a year for every houſe in which there were twenty penny-worth of goods. This was firſt granted by Ina king of the the Weſt Saxons, about the year 726, for the eſtabliſhment and ſupport of an Engliſh college at Rome. It was afterwards extended by Offa over all Mercia and Eaſt Anglia; and in the days of Athelwolf, though the popes appropriated the profits of this tax to themſelves, it was extended over all England. It was alſo confirmed by the laws of Canute, of Edward the Confeſſor, of William the Conqueror, and of ſeveral ſucceeding princes, though it was long conſidered as a *free*

* Expoſition of the Articles, p. 280.

alms

alms on the part of the nation, and was often refuſed to be paid, eſpecially by Edward III. However, it was not totally aboliſhed till the reign of Henry VIII *.

So far did the popiſh exactions in this country, on one account or other, go, that, in the reign of Henry III. the popes received from England more than the king's revenue, or one hundred and twenty thouſand pounds †. In 1366 the lord chancellor aſſured the parliament, that the taxes paid to the pope were five times as much as the king's revenue ‡; and at length the church is ſaid to have got poſſeſſion of one third of all the landed property in England §.

Notwithſtanding the ample revenues of many churches, numbers of the clergy contrived to make large additions to them, by appropriating to themſelves the emoluments of ſeveral church livings; though they could not reſide, and do duty at them all, and nothing could be more contrary to the natural reaſon of things, or the original conſtitution of the chriſtian church. Indeed the maxim that where no duty is done, no reward is due, was ſo obvious, that this was one of the laſt abuſes, that crept into the church. But it grew, under various pretences, to a moſt enormous height; though ſeveral attempts were made, at different times to leſſen the evil.

* Moſheim, vol. ii. p. 278. † Hiſt. of Popery, vol. iii. p. 60.
‡ Ib. p. 570. § Ib. vol. v. p. 266.

About

About the year 500, when what we now call *benefices*, came into uſe, it became cuſtomary to ordain without any title, or deſignation to a particular cure; and many perſons got themſelves ordained prieſts for ſecular purpoſes. Alſo many prelates wanted to increaſe their authority by attaching to themſelves a number of dependants, and many of the people wanted ſpiritual privileges, in order to exempt them from the juriſdiction of princes. Even biſhops (though this was done with more caution) were ordained without any dioceſe, except in infidel countries, which they never viſited; and theſe acted as ſubſtitutes for thoſe biſhops who were too lazy, or too much employed in ſecular affairs, to do duty themſelves. This corruption had ariſen to a moſt enormous height before the council of Trent

The conſequence of titular ordination was *non-reſidence*, and where curates were employed the principal could follow his other buſineſs. Accordingly the biſhops in France, and even the pariſh prieſts, ſubſtituting ſome poor prieſts in their room, paſſed much of their time at court. And if a biſhop could hold one living without reſiding upon it, it was plain that he might hold two or more, and get them ſupplied in the ſame manner.

Titular ordinations, however, which firſt introduced *non-reſidence*, where not the only cauſe of *pluralities*,

pluralities, which are ſaid to have had their origin about the ſixth century, Among benefices beſtowed upon the churches, ſome, as prebends, &c. had no *cure of ſouls* annexed to them. Theſe were judged capable of being held by prieſts who had other livings with cure of ſouls. Alſo pariſhes which were not able to maintain a miniſter were allowed to be ſerved by another miniſter in the neighbourhood, but a diſpenſation from the pope was neceſſary for this purpoſe. By this means, however, the greateſt ſcandal in pluralities was practiſed. This abuſe gave very great offence, but diſpenſations of this kind were ſo neceſſary to ſupport the dignity of cardinals, that they were made perpetual in the court of Rome. The cardinal of Lorraine, who held ſome of the beſt benefices in France, and ſome in Scotland too, was particularly vehement in his declaration againſt pluralities in general, at the council of Trent, without imagining that his own were liable to any objection.

The firſt account of any flagrant abuſe of pluralities occurs in the year 936, when Manaſſeh, biſhop of Arles, obtained of his relation, Hugh king of Italy, ſeveral other biſhopricks, ſo that in all he had four or five at the ſame time. Baronius ſays, that this was a new and great evil, which began to ſtain the church of God, and by which it has been wonderfully afflicted *.

* Sueur, A. D. 936.

A perſon

A perſon is ſaid to hold a church in *commendam*, when he is empowered to have the care and the profits of it till the appointment of another incumbent. This practice was of great antiquity, in order to prevent churches receiving any detriment during a vacancy. But on this pretence livings were afterwards granted for a certain time, which was made longer and longer, or till an event which it was known could not take place, and at length for life. This was done by the plenary power of the pope. In this manner Clement VII. brought pluralities to perfection, by making his nephew, the cardinal de Medicis, *commendatory univerſal*; granting him all the vacant benefices in the world, whether ſecular or regular, dignities, parſonages, ſimple, or with cure of ſouls, for ſix months, and appointing him uſufructury from the firſt day of his poſſeſſion. In England, in which every abuſe and impoſition in eccleſiaſtical matters were carried to the greateſt extent, the richeſt and beſt benefices were engroſſed by the pope, and given in commendam to Italians, who never viſited the country, but employed queſtors to collect their revenues.

Other methods of making pluralities, and diſpoſing of church revenues, were contrived by the court of Rome, ſuch as *proviſions* and *exemptions*, which are hardly worth deſcribing, and ſelling the reverſion of livings, called *expectatives*, as well as livings actually vacant.

The

The firſt attempt that we meet with to check theſe evils, of pluralities and non-reſidence, was made by Charlemaigne, who made ſeveral regulations for that purpoſe; but they were ſoon neglected. Several popes alſo, as John XXII. and Clement V. pretended to reform the ſame abuſes, but without any real effect; and by the evaſion of them even illiterate perſons and children, who were never intended to take orders, might enjoy benefices*.

The council of Trent pretended to remedy the evil of pluralities, but they made it worſe by admitting of *penſions* as an equivalent for the change of benefices and other purpoſes. For theſe came to be granted by the court of Rome without any conſideration, and even to children. They were alſo more convenient, and made church preferment a more eaſy traffic in many reſpects. For inſtance, reſignations were not deemed valid, unleſs the perſon who reſigned lived twenty days afterwards; whereas a *penſion* might be transferred at the point of death. Beſides it might be turned into ready money, whereas a benefice could not without ſimony†.

It is to be lamented that theſe abuſes were not corrected at the reformation of the church of England. On the contrary, it is apprehended

* Pennington on Pluralities, p. 58.
† F. Paul on Eccleſiaſtical Benefices, p. 224.

that

that many of them are increaſed ſince that period, ſo as to exceed what is generally to be found of that nature in ſome Roman Catholic countries. In conſequence of this, though the funds for the maintenance of the clergy are ſufficiently ample, the inequality in the diſtribution of them is ſhameful, and they bear no proportion to the ſervices or merit of thoſe who receive them. This is an evil that calls loudly for redreſs, and ſtrikes many perſons who give no attention to articles of faith, or of diſcipline in other reſpects. Probably, however, this evil will be tolerated, till the whole ſyſtem be reformed, or deſtroyed. But without the ſerious reformation of this and other crying abuſes, the utter deſtruction of the preſent hierarchy muſt, in the natural courſe of things, be expected.

THE

GENERAL CONCLUSION.

PART I.

Containing Conſiderations addreſſed to Unbelievers, and eſpecially to Mr. GIBBON.

TO conſider the ſyſtem (if it may be called a *ſyſtem*) of chriſtianity *a priori*, one would think it very little liable to corruption or abuſe. The great outline of it is, that the univerſal parent of mankind commiſſioned Jeſus Chriſt, to invite men to the practice of virtue, by the aſſurance of his mercy to the penitent, and of his purpoſe to raiſe to immortal life and happineſs all the virtuous and the good, but to inflict an adequate puniſhment on the wicked. In proof of this he wrought many miracles, and after a public execution he roſe again from the dead. He alſo directed that proſelytes to his religion ſhould be admitted by *baptiſm*, and that his diſciples ſhould eat bread and drink wine in commemoration of his death.

Here is nothing that any perſon could imagine would lead to much ſubtle ſpeculation, at leaſt ſuch as could excite much animoſity. The doctrine itſelf is ſo plain, that one would think the learned and the unlearned were upon a level with reſpect

reſpect to it. And a perſon unacquainted with the ſtate of things at the time of its promulgation would look in vain for any probable ſource of the monſtrous corruptions and abuſes which crept into the ſyſtem afterwards. Our Lord, however, and his apoſtles, foretold that there would be a great departure from the truth, and that ſomething would ariſe in the church altogether unlike the doctrine which they taught, and even ſubverſive of it.

In reality, however, the cauſes of the ſucceeding corruptions did then exiſt; and accordingly, without any thing more than their natural operation, all the abuſes roſe to their full height; and what is more wonderful ſtill, by the operation of natural cauſes alſo, without any miraculous interpoſition of providence, we ſee the abuſes gradually corrected, and chriſtianity recovering its primitive beauty and glory.

The cauſes of the corruptions were almoſt wholly contained in the eſtabliſhed opinions of the heathen world, and eſpecially the philoſophical part of it; ſo that when thoſe heathens embraced chriſtianity they mixed their former tenets and prejudices with it. Alſo, both Jews and heathens were ſo much ſcandalized at the idea of being the diſciples of a man who had been crucified as a common malefactor, that chriſtians in general were ſufficiently diſpoſed to adopt any opinion that would moſt effectually wipe away this reproach.

The

The opinion of the mental faculties of man belonging to a ſubſtance diſtinct from his body or brain, and of this inviſible ſpiritual part, or *ſoul*, being capable of ſubſiſting before and after its union to the body, which had taken the deepeſt root in all the ſchools of philoſophy, was wonderfully calculated to anſwer this purpoſe. For by this means, chriſtians were enabled to give to the ſoul of Chriſt what rank they pleaſed in the heavenly regions before his incarnation. On this principle went the Gnoſtics, deriving their doctrine from the received oriental philoſophy. Afterwards the philoſophizing chriſtians went upon another principle, perſonifying the wiſdom, or λογος of God the Father. But this was mere Platoniſm, and therefore cannot be ſaid to have been unnatural in their circumſtances, though at length they came, in the natural progreſs of things, to believe that Chriſt was, in power and glory, equal to God the Father himſelf.

From the ſame opinion of a ſoul diſtinct from the body came the practice of praying, firſt *for* the dead, and then *to* them, with a long train of other abſurd opinions, and ſuperſtitious practices.

The abuſes of the *poſitive inſtitutions* of chriſtianity, monſtrous as they were, naturally aroſe from the opinion of the purifying and ſanctifying virtue of rites and ceremonies, which was the very baſis of all the worſhip of the heathens; and they were alſo ſimilar to the abuſes of the Jewiſh

religion. We likewiſe ſee the rudiments of all the *monkiſh auſterities* in the opinions and practices of the heathens, who thought to purify and exalt the ſoul by macerating and mortifying the body.

As to the abuſes in the *government of the church*, they are as eaſily accounted for as abuſes in civil government; worldly minded men being always ready to lay hold of every opportunity of increaſing their power; and in the dark ages too many circumſtances concurred to give the chriſtian clergy peculiar advantages over the laity in this reſpect.

Upon the whole, I flatter myſelf that, to an attentive reader of this work, it will appear, that the corruption of chriſtianity, in every article of faith or practice, was the natural conſequence of the circumſtances in which it was promulgated; and alſo that its recovery from theſe corruptions is the natural conſequence of different circumſtances. LET UNBELIEVERS, IF THEY CAN, ACCOUNT AS WELL FOR THE FIRST RISE AND ESTABLISHMENT OF CHRISTIANITY ITSELF. This is a problem, which, hiſtorians and philoſophers (bound to believe that no effect is produced without an adequate cauſe) will find to be of more difficult ſolution the more cloſely it is attended to.

The circumſtances that Mr. Gibbon enumerates as the immediate *cauſes* of the ſpread of chriſtianity were themſelves *effects*, and neceſſarily

rily required ſuch cauſes as, I imagine, he would be unwilling to allow. The revolution produced by chriſtianity in the opinions and conduct of men, as he himſelf deſcribes it, was truly aſtoniſhing; and this, he cannot deny, was produced without the concurrence, nay notwithſtanding the oppoſition, of all the civil powers of the world; and what is perhaps more, it was oppoſed by all the learning, genius, and wit of the age too. For chriſtianity was aſſailed as much by ridicule and reproach as it was by open perſecution; and, be the ſpread of it what Mr. Gibbon pleaſes, he cannot deny that it kept uniformly gaining ground, taking in all deſcriptions of men without diſtinction, before it had any foreign aid; and what then remained of the old religions was not ſufficient to occaſion any ſenſible obſtruction to the full eſtabliſhment of it. The Jewiſh religion alone was an exception; and this circumſtance, together with the riſe of chriſtianity among the Jews, are facts that deſerve Mr. Gibbon's particular attention.

Of all mankind, the Jews were the moſt unlikely to ſet up any religion, ſo different from their own; and as unlikely was it that other nations, and eſpecially the polite and learned among them, ſhould receive a religion from Jews, and thoſe ſome of the moſt ignorant of that deſpiſed nation.

Let Mr. Gibbon recollect his own idea of the Jews, which ſeems to be much the ſame with

that of Voltaire, and think whether it be at all probable, that they ſhould have originally invented a religion ſo eſſentially different from any other in the world, as that which is deſcribed in the books of Moſes; that the whole nation ſhould then have adopted without objection, what they were afterwards ſo prone to abandon for the rites of any of their neighbours; or that when, by ſevere diſcipline, they had acquired the attachment to it which they are afterwards known to have done, and which continues to this day, it be probable they would have invented, or have adopted another, which they conceived to be ſo different from, and ſubverſive of their own. If they had been ſo fertile of invention, it might have been expected that they would have ſtruck out ſome other ſince the time of Chriſt, a period of near two thouſand years.

On this ſubject Mr. Gibbon ſays*, that "in "contradiction to every known principle of the "human mind, that ſingular people ſeem to have "yielded a ſtronger and more ready aſſent to the "traditions of their remote anceſtors, than to the "evidence of their own ſenſes." A ſingular people, indeed, if this was the caſe; for then they muſt not have been *men*, but beings in the ſhape of men only, though internally conſtituted in ſome very different manner. But what facts in hiſtory may not be repreſented as probable or improbable, on ſuch looſe ſuppoſitions as theſe?

* Hiſtory, vol. i. p. 539.

Such

Such liberties as theſe I ſhall neither take, nor grant. Jews are *men*, and men are beings, whoſe affections and actions are ſubject to as ſtrict rules as thoſe of the animate or inanimate parts of nature. Their conduct, therefore, muſt be accounted for on ſuch principles as always have influenced the conduct of men, and ſuch as we obſerve ſtill to influence men.

I wiſh Mr. Gibbon would conſider whether he does not, in the paſſage above quoted, uſe the word *tradition* in an improper manner. By tradition we generally mean ſomething for which we have not the evidence of hiſtories written at the time of the events. We never talk of the tradition of the wars of Julius Cæſar, or of his death in the ſenate houſe, nor even of the tradition of the conqueſts of Alexander the Great; becauſe there were hiſtories of thoſe events written at the time, or ſo near to the time, as to be fully within the memory of thoſe who were witneſſes of them.

Now Moſes, and the other writers of the Old Teſtament, were as much preſent at the time of the tranſactions they relate, as the hiſtorians of Julius Cæſar, or Alexander. An incautious reader (and there are too many ſuch) would be apt to imagine from Mr. Gibbon's manner of expreſſing himſelf, that the Jews did not even pretend to have *written hiſtories* of the ſame age with the origin of their religion, but that it was in the ſame predicament with what he calls "the elegant

"mythology of Greece and Rome;" whereas, the fact is, that every tittle of it was committed to writing at the time. It is generally in ſuch an *indirect* manner as this, and not by a fair and candid repreſentation of facts, that unbelievers endeavour to diſcredit the ſyſtem of revelation.

Let Mr. Gibbon, as an hiſtorian, compare the riſe and progreſs of Mahometaniſm, with that of Judaiſm, or of chriſtianity, and attend to the difference. Beſides the influence of the *ſword*, which chriſtianity certainly had not, Mahometaniſm ſtood on the baſis of the Jewiſh and chriſtian revelations. If theſe had not been firmly believed in the time of Mahomet, what credit would his religion have gained? In theſe circumſtances he muſt have invented ſome other ſyſtem, which would have required *viſible miracles* of its own, which he might have found ſome difficulty in paſſing upon his followers; though they were in circumſtances far more eaſy to be impoſed upon than the Jews or the heathens, in the time of our Saviour. This was an age of light and of ſuſpicion; the other, if any, of darkneſs and credulity. That chriſtianity *grew up in ſilence and obſcurity*, as Mr. Gibbon ſays*, is the very reverſe of the truth. He could not himſelf imagine circumſtances in which the principal facts on which chriſtianity is founded ſhould be ſubject to a more rigid ſcrutiny. *Theſe things*, as Paul ſaid to king Agrippa, *were not done in a corner*. Acts xxvi. 26.

* Vol. i. p. 535.

It

It appears to me, that, admitting all the miraculous events which the evangelical hiſtory aſſerts, it was not probable that chriſtianity ſhould have been received with leſs difficulty than it was; but without that aſſiſtance, abſolutely impoſſible for it to have been received at all.

Mr. Gibbon repreſents the diſcredit into which the old religions were fallen, as having made way for the new one. "So urgent," ſays he*, "on "the vulgar is the neceſſity of believing, that the "fall of any ſyſtem of mythology will moſt pro- "bably be ſucceeded by the introduction of ſome "other mode of ſuperſtition."

But are not the vulgar, *men*, as well as the learned, their underſtanding being naturally as good and as various, and certainly as ſubject to the ſame laws; and *neceſſity of believing*, or *proneneſs to belief* is not greater in the one than in the other; but the expreſſion is looſe and inaccurate, and calculated to impoſe on ſuperficial readers. Beſides, if any ſet of men had this property of *proneneſs to believe*, they muſt to be all of a piece, have a proportionable unwillingneſs to quit their belief, at leaſt without very ſufficient evidence; and yet thoſe *vulgar* of all nations, are ſuppoſed by Mr. Gibbon to have abandoned the belief of their own mythology ſome time before chriſtianity came, to ſupply the vacancy. Such *vulgar* as thoſe I ſhould think intitled to the more reſpect-

* Vol. i. p. 602.

able appellation of *free thinkers*, which with many is ſynonymous to *philoſophers*. And, in fact, it was not with the vulgar, but with the philoſophers, that the religions of Greece and Rome were fallen into diſcredit. We ought, therefore, to judge of their caſe by that of the philoſophical part of the world at preſent.

With many of *them* chriſtianity is now rejected; but do they, on that account, ſeem diſpoſed to adopt any other mode of religion, or any other ſyſtem of mythology in its place? And would not ſuch men as Mr. Hume or Helvetius among the dead, and Mr. Gibbon himſelf among the living, examine with ſcrupulous exactneſs the pretenſions of any ſyſtem of divine revelation, eſpecially before he would regulate his life by it, and go to the ſtake for it. And yet philoſophers of antiquity, men of as good underſtanding as Mr. Gibbon, and who, no doubt, loved life, and the pleaſures and advantages of it, as much as he does, embraced chriſtianity, and died for it.

But beſides the *urgency of this neceſſity of believing*, another cauſe of the rapid ſpread of chriſtianity, was that it held out to mankind ſomething worth believing. "When the promiſe of eter-"nal happineſs," he ſays*, "was propoſed to "mankind, on condition of adopting the faith, "and obſerving the precepts of the goſpel, it is

* Hiſtory, vol. i. p. 561.

"no

" no wonder that ſo advantageous an offer ſhould " be accepted by great numbers of every religion, " of every rank, and of every province in the " Roman empire."

Now it is certainly no diſcredit to chriſtianity, that the views it exhibits of a future ſtate appeared more rational, and more inviting, than the accounts of *Tartarus* and the *Elyſian ſhades*. But beſides appearing more *inviting*, they muſt alſo have appeared more *credible*, from the general external evidence of the truth of chriſtianity. And here alſo Mr. Gibbon ſeems to have been inattentive to the principles of human nature.

In general the more *extraordinary* any event appears to be, the more evidence we require of it. It is this conſideration that makes more definite evidence neceſſary for a miracle, than for an ordinary fact; though it is acknowledged, that the *deſirableneſs* of any particular event, by intereſting our *wiſhes*, will tend to make us admit it on ſomewhat leſs evidence. The great advantages, therefore, propoſed to men from any ſcheme, eſpecially one in which they were to run ſome riſque, and in which they were to make great ſacrifices, would not diſpoſe them to receive it without evidence. *It is too good news to be true*, is a remark perpetually made by the very *vulgar* of whom Mr. Gibbon is ſpeaking. When the diſciples of our Lord ſaw him for the firſt time after his reſurrection, it is ſaid (Luke xxiv. 41.)

xxiv. 41.) that *they believed not through joy*; and when, before this, they were told by three or four women of character, and for whom they had the higheſt reſpect, that they had themſelves ſeen him alive, and had a meſſage from him to them, *Their words ſeemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.* Luke, xxiv. 11. This was perfectly natural; and ſuch circumſtances as theſe are ſtrong internal evidence of the hiſtorians deſcribing real facts, and real feelings of the human heart correſponding to thoſe facts.

Beſides, how can any man, to uſe Mr. Gibbon's own language, *adopt the faith* of the goſpel, whatever promiſes might be made to him for ſo doing, unleſs its tenets appeared to him to be *reaſonable?* What would Mr. Gibbon take to believe the doctrine of the Trinity, or what would he ſacrifice in this life for the moſt magnificent promiſe in a future one, made by a perſon whoſe ability to make good that promiſe he at all ſuſpected. Plato's doctrine of the *immortality of the ſoul* was ſufficiently flattering: but whom was it ever known to influence, like the chriſtian doctrine of a *reſurrection*? The plain reaſon was, that the latter was propoſed with ſufficient *evidence*, whereas the former was altogether deſtitute of it.

It is amuſing enough to obſerve how very differently Mr. Gibbon repreſents the ſtate of the heathen world with reſpect to chriſtianity, when he

e would inſinuate an apology for the perſecution f the chriſtians. " It might be expected," he ys*, " that they would unite with indignation againſt any ſect or people, which would ſeparate itſelf from the communion of mankind, and, claiming the excluſive privilege of divine knowledge, ſhould diſclaim every form of worſhip except its own, as impious and idolatrous."

Mr. Gibbon, I ſuppoſe, never aſked himſelf hether it was natural for the ſame kind of people be ſo very differently affected towards the ime thing. But, unfortunately, his purpoſe reuired that to account for the ready reception of hriſtianity upon inſufficient evidence, ſome of hoſe heathens muſt be furniſhed with an *urgent eceſſity of believing* any new religion that was prooſed to them, eſpecially one that promiſed ſuch reat and glorious things as chriſtianity did; hile, on the other hand, to account alſo for the ery ill reception that the preachers of chriſtianity et with (which he cannot deny) others of them uſt be furniſhed with a diſpoſition to hate and eteſt thoſe who pretended to ſo much.

I do not know any thing that can help Mr. ibbon in this caſe better than the known prinples of his favourite *mythology*. As the preſent ace of mankind are derived from the ſtones hich Deucalion and Pyrrha threw over their

* Hiſtory, vol. i. p. 622.

heads

heads (when perhaps they were in too much haſte to repeople the vacant world) they might not be ſufficiently attentive to the nature of thoſe materials of the future race of mortals, but take ſtones of different degrees of hardneſs. In conſequence of this, ſome of them may have been of a ſofter diſpoſition, and more eaſy of belief than others. Being, therefore, ſo differently conſtituted, the deſcendents of ſome of them might be inſtinctive believers, and others inſtinctive perſecutors of thoſe believers. They would then be, of courſe, as hoſtile to each other as thoſe men who ſprung out of the earth, from the ſowing of the ſerpents teeth, in the elegant mythology of Greece, as the ſtory is moſt elegantly related by Ovid*.

Beſides theſe conſiderations, Mr. Gibbon mentions the *zeal* of the primitive chriſtians, and the ſtrictneſs of their *diſcipline*, as cauſes of the ſpread of the new religion. But he ſhould have told us whence came that zeal, and that ſtrictneſs of diſcipline. If no ſufficient *cauſe* of it had appeared, their zeal would have expoſed them to contempt; and their diſcipline would have diſcouraged rather than have invited proſelytes.

* I have heard of a young gentleman of a ſceptical and jocular turn, taking off his hat to a ſtatue of Jupiter (who makes the moſt reſpectable figure in this ſyſtem of mythology) and ſaying, "If ever "you come into power again, pleaſe to remember that I ſhewed you "reſpect when nobody elſe did." Mr. Gibbon, I hope, has no ſerious views in complimenting the religion of Greece and Rome, meaning to pay his court to the *powers that may be*, as others do to thoſe that *are*.

Any

Any perſon may hold himſelf excuſed from inveſtigating the cauſes that gave birth to the opinions of *individuals* of mankind, on account of the difficulty and uncertainty of ſuch an inveſtigation. The ſame may, in ſome degree, be ſaid of particular claſſes of men. But chriſtianity recommended itſelf to every deſcription of men then exiſting, and influenced them not for a ſhort time only, which might be accounted for from temporary and local circumſtances, but *permanently*; ſo as to leave no reaſonable doubt, but that it would have gone on to eſtabliſh itſelf in the world, and to extirpate idolatry, if the civil powers had continued to oppoſe its progreſs three thouſand years, as they did three hundred years; and what is more, notwithſtanding the groſs corruptions and abuſes which ſoon crept into it.

A fact of this kind requires to be accounted for from the moſt obvious principles of human nature, principles common to all men; and all claſſes of men; therefore none but the plaineſt and moſt cogent *cauſes of aſſent*, deſerve to be attended to. This aſſent to the truth of chriſtianity could only be produced by ſuch evidence as always will, and always ought to determine the aſſent of the human mind.

It is acknowledged that to be a chriſtian a man muſt believe ſome facts that are of an extraordinary nature, ſuch as we have no opportunity of obſerving

obſerving at preſent. But thoſe facts were ſo circumſtanced, that perſons who cannot be denied to have had the beſt opportunity of examining the evidence of them, and who, if they had not been true, had no motive to pay any regard to them, could not refuſe their aſſent to them; that is, it was ſuch evidence as we ourſelves muſt have been determined by, if we had been in their place; and therefore, if not fully equivalent to the evidence of our own ſenſes at preſent, is, at leaſt, all the evidence that, at this diſtance of time, we *can* have in the caſe. It goes upon the principle that human nature was the ſame thing then that it is now; and certainly in all other reſpects it appears to be ſo.

That miracles are things in themſelves *poſſible*, muſt be allowed ſo long as it is evident that there is in nature a power equal to the working of them. And certainly the *power*, *principle*, or *being*, by whatever name it be denominated, which produced the univerſe, and eſtabliſhed the laws of it, is fully equal to any occaſional departures from them. The *object* and *uſe* of thoſe miracles on which the chriſtian religion is founded, is alſo maintained to be conſonant to the object and uſe of the general ſyſtem of nature, viz. the production of happineſs. We have nothing, therefore to do, but to examine, by the known rules of eſtimating the value of *teſtimony*, whether there, be reaſon to think that ſuch miracles have been wrought,

wrought, or whether the evidence of chriſtianity, or of the chriſtian hiſtory, does not ſtand upon as good ground as that of any other hiſtory whatever.

Now, though I am far from holding myſelf out as the champion of chriſtianity, againſt all the world, I own I ſhall have no objection to diſcuſs this ſubject with Mr. Gibbon, as an hiſtorian, and a philoſopher. We are only two individuals, and no other perſons can be bound by the reſult of our diſcuſſion. But thoſe who have given leſs attention to the ſubject than we have done, may be inſtructed by it, and be aſſiſted in forming their own judgment, according to the evidence that ſhall be laid before them. At leaſt, it may be a means of drawing ſome degree of attention to a ſubject which cannot be denied to be, in the higheſt degree, intereſting.

Indeed, if any man can ſay, that it is not an intereſting queſtion, whether his exiſtence terminate at death, or is to be reſumed at a future period, and then to continue for ever, he muſt be of a low and abject mind. To a rational being, capable of contemplating the wonders of nature, and of inveſtigating the laws of it, and to a being of a ſocial diſpoſition, his exiſtence, and the continuance of his rational faculties, muſt be an object of unſpeakable value to him; and conſequently he muſt ardently wiſh that chriſtianity (which

(which alone *brings life and immortality to light*) may be true. For to a philoſopher, who forms his judgment by what he actually obſerves, the doctrine of a *ſoul*, capable of ſubſiſting and acting when the body is in the grave, will never give any ſatisfaction. To every perſon, therefore, who is capable of enjoying his exiſtence, the chriſtian doctrine of a *reſurrection*, opens a glorious and tranſporting proſpect.

Voluntarily to ſhut one's eyes on ſuch a proſpect, and really to wiſh to ſee no more of the wonders of nature, and of the progreſs of being, and eſpecially of the human race, towards perfection, but to hide one's head in everlaſting obſcurity, muſt be to have a diſpoſition as groveling, baſe, and abject, as that of the loweſt of the brute creation. A man of the leaſt elevation of mind, and of a cultivated and improved underſtanding muſt, ſurely, lament ſuch a cataſtrophe.

The fear might be, that every truly ſenſible and virtuous man would be too ſtrongly biaſſed in favour of chriſtianity and (if Mr. Gibbon's obſervation above mentioned be true) give his aſſent long before he had waited to weigh the evidence as he ought to do. I do not, however, wiſh Mr. Gibbon to ſhew this diſpoſition. On the contrary, I wiſh to examine every thing with the greateſt rigour, and I will not contend with him for trifles. With reſpect to ſome points which

which he has laboured, though I am ſatisfied his repreſentations are partial and unfair, I have no objection to concede almoſt all that he contends for; becauſe, though he has taken very liberally, he has left me enough.

When the circumſtances of the Jews and heathens, at the time of the promulgation of chriſtianity, ſhall be ſufficiently conſidered (but to which it is evident Mr. Gibbon has given but a ſlight attention) the reception that this new religion met with among them, and the total ſubverſion of the ſeveral ſyſtems of paganiſm by it, will be found to be a more extraordinary thing, on the ſuppoſition of the goſpel hiſtory not being true, more contrary to the preſent courſe of nature, and conſequently more improbable, than the hiſtory of Chriſt and the apoſtles as contained in the New Teſtament, which makes the whole of the ſubſequent hiſtory perfectly eaſy and natural. In ſhort, the queſtion is, whether Mr. Gibbon or myſelf, believe in more numerous, more extraordinary, or more uſeleſs miracles. On this fair unexceptionable ground I am willing to meet him.

I alſo ſhall not contend with him for quite ſo much as his late antagoniſts, members of the church of England, muſt include in the ſyſtem of chriſtianity. But by abandoning their out works, I may perhaps be better able to make an effectual defence.

My religion does not ſuppoſe, with biſhop Hurd, "that the offices in which the godhead "is employed are either degrading or imply an "immoderate and inconceivable condeſcenſion*:" I ſhall not urge Mr. Gibbon to admit, that "a "divine perſon, divine in the higheſt ſenſe of the "word, deſcended from heaven, and ſuffered "death†, that the *divine nature* condeſcended to "leave the manſions of glory, was made man, "dwelled among us, and died for us‡."

I ſhall not pretend, with the ſame learned biſhop, that *a third divine perſon* gave this ſecond divine perſon "power to caſt out devils, and "raiſed him from the dead§." Neither ſhall I urge him with "a purpoſe to ſave and ſanctify "men by means that he himſelf can think ſan-"ciful or deluſive¶," and maintain that Chriſt, "in virtue of his all atoning death, has opened "the gates of eternal life, to the whole race of "mortal men‖," which the biſhop enumerates "among "the great things of which Chriſt "ſpake, and the amazing topics with which he "filled his diſcourſes‖‖."

* See Biſhop Hurd's Sermons, vol. iii. p. 33. † Ib. p. 63.

‡ That the *divine nature* of Chriſt ſhould *die*, is, ſurely, more than Dr. Hurd's chriſtian creed obliges him to aſſert, unleſs he may think that without this, his doctrine of *atonement* could not be compleated.

§ Biſhop Hurd's Sermons, vol. ii. p. 337. ¶ Ib. vol. iii. p. 33. ‖ Ib. vol. iii. p. 64.

‖‖ A common reader might peruſe our Lord's diſcourſes many times, before he found any ſuch *topics* as theſe, with which they are ſaid

I am ſenſible that it would be in vain to urge any external hiſtorical evidence of a revelation, of which ſuch doctrines as theſe ſhould make a part. They are things that no miracles can prove. As ſoon ſhould I propoſe to him the belief of Mahomet's journey to the third heavens, and all his converſations with God while a pitcher of water was falling, or the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation, neither of which are more abſurd, and both of them are much more innocent.

I am ſorry, however, to have occaſion to admoniſh Mr. Gibbon, that he ſhould have diſtinguiſhed better than he has done between chriſtianity itſelf, and the corruptions of it. A ſerious chriſtian ſtrongly attached to ſome particular tenets, may be excuſed if, in reading eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, he ſhould not make the proper diſtinc-

ſaid to be *filled*. But I the leſs wonder at this, when I find this writer attempting to prove at large, that by *waſhing the diſciples feet* our Lord meant to teach the great doctrine of *atonement by his blood*, and wondering that Grotius and other commentators ſhould not ſee it in the ſame light. Sermons, vol. i. p. 177, &c.

But I own I am ſurprized that he ſhould maintain, vol. iii. p. 67, that "Chriſt ſpake by virtue of his own eſſential right, from himſelf, "and in his own name, as well as by eſpecial appointment of God "his Father," when he himſelf, in the moſt unequivocal language repeatedly aſſerts the contrary; as John v. 30, *I can of my own ſelf do nothing*. Ch. vii. 6. *My doctrine is not mine, but his that ſent me*. Ch. xiv. 10. *The words that I ſpeak to you, I ſpeak not of myſelf, but the Father, who dwelleth in me, he doeth the works*. It muſt be a ſtrong bias in favour of a ſyſtem that can make a perſon overlook ſuch texts as theſe. But even the greateſt and beſt of men have been miſled in the ſame way.

tions; but this allowance cannot be made for ſo cool and philoſophical a ſpectator as Mr. Gibbon.

He ſhould not have taken it for granted, that the doctrine of three perſons in one God, or the doctrine of *atonement* for the ſins of all mankind, by the death of one man, were any parts of the chriſtian ſyſtem; when, if he had read the New Teſtament for himſelf, he muſt have ſeen the doctrine of the proper *unity of God*, and alſo that of his *free mercy* to the penitent, in almoſt every page of it. As he does ſpeak of the *corruptions of chriſtianity*, he ſhould have examined farther both as an hiſtorian, and as a man, For as an individual, he is as much intereſted in the inquiry as any other perſon; and no inquiry whatever is ſo intereſting to any man as this is.

As to what Mr. Gibbon, with a ſneer of triumph, ſays*, of " Plato having 360 years before " the chriſtian æra, anticipated one of the moſt " ſurprizing diſcoveries of the chriſtian revela- " tion," and of the " theology of Plato having " been confirmed with the celeſtial pen of the laſt " and moſt ſublime of the evangeliſts, 97 years " after that æra; like all his other ſarcaſms againſt chriſtianity, it is founded on ignorance. But he is more excuſable in this than in other caſes, as too many chriſtians have been chargeable with the ſame; confounding the *Logos* of

* Vol. ii. p. 240, 242.

Plato

Plato with that of John, and making of it a ſecond perſon in the trinity, than which no two things can be more different, as has been clearly explained by my excellent and judicious friend Mr. Lindſey, eſpecially in his *Catechiſt*, in the preface to which he has very properly animadverted upon this paſſage of Mr. Gibbon.

Mr. Gibbon has much to learn concerning the goſpel before he can be properly qualified to write againſt it. Hitherto he ſeems to have been acquainted with nothing but the corrupt eſtabliſhments of what is very improperly called chriſtianity; whereas it is incumbent upon him to read and ſtudy the New Teſtament for himſelf. There he will find nothing like Platoniſm, but doctrines in every reſpect the reverſe of that ſyſtem of philoſophy, which weak and undiſtinguiſhing chriſtians afterwards incorporated with it.

Had Mr. Gibbon lived in France, Spain, or Italy, he might with the ſame reaſon have ranked the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation, and the worſhip of ſaints and angels among the eſſentials of chriſtianity, as the doctrines of the trinity and of the atonement.

The friends of genuine, and I will add of rational chriſtianity, have not, however, on the whole, much reaſon to regret that their enemies have not made theſe diſtinctions; ſince, by this

means, we have been taught to make them ourſelves; ſo that chriſtianity is perhaps as much indebted to its enemies, as to its friends, for this important ſervice. In their indiſcriminate attacks, whatever has been found to be untenable has been gradually abandoned, and I hope the attack will be continued till nothing of the wretched outworks be left; and then, I doubt not, a ſafe and impregnable fortreſs, will be found in the center, a fortreſs built upon a rock, againſt which *the gates of death will not prevail.*

When the preſent criſis is over (and I think we may ſee that the period is not far diſtant) that by means of the objections of unbelievers, and the attention which, in conſequence of it, will be given to the ſubject by believers, chriſtianity ſhall be reſtored to its primitive purity, the cool and truly ſenſible part of mankind will, in this very circumſtance, perceive an argument for its truth; and thus even the corruptions of chriſtianity will have anſwered a very valuable purpoſe; as having been the means of ſupplying ſuch an evidence of its truth, as could not have been derived from any other circumſtance. Let any other religion be named that ever was ſo much corrupted, and that recovered itſelf from ſuch corruption, and continued to be profeſſed with unqueſtionable zeal by men of reflection and underſtanding, and I ſhall look upon it with reſpect, and not reject it without a very particular examination. The revival of a zeal for the religion of Greece and Rome

Rome under Julian is not to be compared with the attachment to chriſtianity by inquiſitive and learned men in the preſent age. Let literature and ſcience flouriſh but one century in Aſia, and what would be the ſtate of Mahometaniſm, the religion of the Hindoos, or that of the Tartars, ſubject to the Grand Lama? I ſhould rejoice to hear of ſuch a challenge as I give Mr. Gibbon, being ſent from a mahometan Mufti to the chriſtian world.

Should what I call pure chriſtianity (the moſt eſſential articles of which I conſider to be the proper *unity of God*, and the proper *humanity of Chriſt*) continue to ſpread as it now does, and as, from the operation of the ſame cauſes, I have no doubt but that, in ſpite of all oppoſition, it will do, and literature revive among the Jews and Mahometans (who, it is remarkable, were never learned and inquiſitive, but in an age in which all the chriſtianity they could ſee muſt have ſtruck them with horror, as a ſyſtem of abominable and groſs idolatry, to which their own ſyſtems are totally repugnant) Should learning and enquiry, I ſay, once more revive among the Jews and Mahometans, at the ſame time that a great part of the chriſtian world ſhould be free from that idolatry which has given them ſuch juſt offence, they would be much more favourably impreſſed with the idea of chriſtianity than they were in former times.

It alſo, can hardly be ſuppoſed, but that the general converſion of the Jews after a ſtate of ſuch long and violent oppoſition (which will in all future time exclude the idea of their having acted in concert with the chriſtians) will be followed by the converſion of all the thinking part of the world. And if, before or after this time, the Jews ſhould return to their own country, the whole will be ſuch a manifeſt fulfilment of the prophecies of ſcripture, as will leave no reaſonable colour for infidelity.

In the proſpect of this great and glorious event I rejoice; and I wiſh to contribute a little towards haſtening its approach, both by unfolding the hiſtory of chriſtianity, with all the corruptions of it, and ſubmitting to the moſt rigid examination whatever I think to be really a part of it. To this, all the friends of genuine chriſtianity will chearfully ſay, AMEN.

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GENERAL CONCLUSION.

PART II.

Containing Conſiderations addreſſed to the Advocates of the preſent Civil Eſtabliſhments of Chriſtianity, and eſpecially BISHOP HURD.

AFTER relating, with ſo much freedom, the riſe, progreſs, and preſent ſtate, of what I deem to be *corruptions of chriſtianity*, and eſpecially in the eſtabliſhed ſyſtems of it, all of which I conſider as *antichriſtian*, being both exceedingly corrupt in their *principles*, and ſupported by a *power* totally foreign to that of the kingdom of Chriſt; I cannot help expreſſing my earneſt wiſhes, that ſomething may be done by thoſe who have influence, to remove theſe evils, or at leaſt to palliate them. And I cannot help conſidering thoſe prelates who really have influence in theſe matters as highly criminal, in this enlightened age, if they are not apprized of the abuſes, and if they do not uſe their endeavours to rectify them.

It will not be imagined that I have the leaſt proſpect of being benefited myſelf by any alteration that can take place in the eccleſiaſtical ſyſtem of my own country. All I wiſh, as a chriſtian,

chriſtian, from the powers of this world, is that they would not intermeddle at all in the buſineſs of religion, and that they would give no countenance whatever to any mode of it, my own, or that of others, but ſhew ſo much confidence in the principles of what they themſelves deem to be true religion, as to think it able to guard itſelf.

But though I have nothing to aſk for myſelf, much may, and ought to be done for thoſe who do not look quite ſo far as I do. Many excellent men among the clergy of the church of England are exceedingly diſtreſſed with the obligation to ſubſcribe what they cannot believe, and to recite what they utterly condemn; and yet their circumſtances are ſuch, as too ſtrongly tempt them to make the beſt of their ſituation, rather than abſolutely ſtarve; and many others are continually prevented from entering the church by the ſame ſtate of things in it. Even the guilt of thoſe men who are induced to comply to the diſquiet of their conſciences will lie, in a great meaſure, at the door of thoſe who could relieve them, if they were in earneſt to do it.

Thoſe who have any principle themſelves muſt feel ſomething for thoſe who find themſelves obliged by a principle of conſcience abſolutely to abandon their preferment in the church. Many and painful muſt have been their ſtruggles, before they could bring themſelves to execute a reſolution,

tion, which is viewed with wonder and regret by many of their beſt friends, and with indifference or contempt by the world at large. But they have reſpect to *other ſpectators*, at preſent inviſible, but whoſe approbation will hereafter be of more value than all things elſe; and while they are conſcious that what they *forſake* in this world is *for the ſake of Chriſt, and the goſpel*; Matt. xix. 29. they cannot be unhappy even now. Few of theſe caſes, it is probable, come to the hearing of thoſe whom no ſuch ſcruples diſturb*. But while ſuch is the ſtate of things in this country, and the cry for reformation grows louder every day, *Woe unto them that are thus at eaſe in our Zion.* Amos, vi. 1.

If I could for a moment wiſh myſelf in the ſituation of thoſe prelates who have influence in the preſent ſtate of things in this country (but, indeed, I am far from conſidering their ſituation as an enviable one, thinking my own, as a Diſſenting miniſter, deſpicable as I am ſenſible it muſt appear to them, to be in reality more uſeful, more honourable, and more happy) it would be to acquire that immortal renown which it is in their power to ſecure by promoting ſuch a reformation. But the ſame ſituation would probably lead

* In the courſe of the laſt ſix months only I have heard of five freſh inſtances of clergymen who, on account of becoming Unitarians, have abandoned either actual preferment, or conſiderable proſpects in the church. It is probable there are others that I have not heard of.

me

me to ſee things in the ſame light in which they ſee them; and being eaſy myſelf, I might feel as little as they do for thoſe who were ill at eaſe under me.

It is, I am ſenſible, extremely difficult to put one's ſelf exactly in the place of another perſon, and therefore it is equally difficult to make proper allowance for the ſentiments and conduct of other perſons. But if it be a *ſituation* that neceſſarily leads any ſet of men to judge and act wrong, it ſhould be a reaſon with thoſe who ſee the influence of that ſituation, to remove the cauſe of offence. This work, we may aſſure ourſelves, will be done; and if thoſe in whoſe power it now is, be not the proper inſtruments for it, others will be found, in God's own time, both in Roman Catholic countries, and in this.

The work of reformation is advancing a pace in ſeveral Roman catholic countries; and this will make it doubly reproachful to us, at leaſt, not to *keep* the lead we have hitherto plumed ourſelves upon taking, in what relates to *religious liberty*, and to which we muſt be ſenſible that we owe much of the honour, and even the flouriſhing ſtate of our country.

One of the worſt ſymptoms of the preſent time is, that men of the greateſt eminence in the church, and of the moſt unqueſtionable ability, appear

appear to be either wholly indifferent to the ſubject, or, inſtead of promoting a farther reformation, employ all their ingenuity to make men acquieſce in the preſent ſyſtem; when all they can urge is ſo palpably weak, that it is barely poſſible they ſhould be in earneſt; not indeed in their wiſhes to keep things as they are, but in thinking their arguments have that weight in themſelves which they wiſh them to have with others. To ſee ſuch men as biſhop Hurd in this claſs of writers, a claſs ſo little reſpectable, when he is qualified to claſs with Tillotſon, Hoadley, and Clarke, equally excites one's pity and indignation.

This truly able writer has all the appearance of being really ſerious, in alleging that the reformers of the church of England were "as well qualified "to judge concerning the ſyſtem of chriſtianity "as we now are." "They had only," he ſays*, "to copy, or rather to inſpect the holy ſcriptures, "which lay open to them as they do to us;" as "if it required nothing more than *eyes*, capable of diſtinguiſhing the *words* of ſcripture, to enter into their real *meaning*. But had not the Papiſts, the Lutherans, the Calviniſts, the Anabaptiſts, and the Socinians, of the ſame age, *eyes*, as well as the reformers of the church of England? And, I may add, were they not men of as good underſtanding?

* Sermons, vol. i. p. 215.

But

But he adds*, "The ſcriptures were taken "by them for their ſole rule of faith; and there- "fore what ſhould hinder them, when they read "thoſe ſcriptures, from ſeeing as diſtinctly as we "do at this day?" I anſwer, the ſame thing, "whatever it is, that makes men interpret the ſcriptures ſo differently from the truth at this day. Was that an age exempt from *prejudice*; or were the reformers in England the only perſons ſo privileged? All the claſſes of reformers above enumerated appealed to the ſcriptures alike.

However, it is far from being true that the Engliſh reformers, whatever they might *pretend*, were determined by the authority of ſcripture only. It is evident to moſt perſons, though it may not be ſo to biſhop Hurd, that they were much influenced by the doctrines of the ſecond, the third, and even later centuries. What elſe could have led them to adopt the Nicene, and eſpecially the Athanaſian creed? This was going far beyond the canon of the ſcriptures. Or ſhould the Engliſh reformers have ſeriouſly propoſed to themſelves to make the ſcriptures their only rule, how was it poſſible for them, educated as they were, in the complicated ſyſtem of popery, to read them with unprejudiced eyes?

But "the reformation," he ſays†, "was not "carried on with us in a precipitate, tumultuous

* Sermons, vol. i. p. 235. † Ib. p. 240.

"manner,

" manner, as it was for the moſt part on the con-
" tinent. On the other hand, it advanced, under
" the eye of the magiſtrate, by ſlow degrees.
" Nay it was more than once checked and kept
" back by him. Hence it came to paſs, that
" there was time allowed for taking the full be-
" nefit of all the diſcoveries made abroad, and for
" ſtudying the chief points of controverſy with
" care. In fact, between the firſt contentions in
" Germany on account of religion, and the final
" ſettlement of the church of England under
" queen Elizabeth, there was a ſpace of near
" half a century."

It is obvious to remark, that the very ſame encomium might have been beſtowed upon the church of England, if it had been fixed in any of the different periods, in which it was *fixed* (and which is here called being *checked* and *kept back*) by one prince, or advanced by another, as well as where it was *checked* and *kept back* (for this biſhop Hurd cannot deny to have been the caſe) by queen Elizabeth. It would alſo have been equally applicable to any different eſtabliſhment that ſhould have been made after the reformation had been moving on a *complete half century*, as well as *nearly one*, or if it had gone on afterwards (ſtill under the controlling eye of the magiſtrate) to this day. For why ſhould not our preſent civil governors be as good judges in matters of religion, as any perſons in the ſame ſituations could have

have been two hundred years ago? Juſt ſo much more time has elapſed ſince "the firſt contentions in Germany on account of religion," and conſequently more time would have been allowed for taking the full benefit of all the diſcoveries that have been made both at home and abroad, &c. And it cannot be doubted but that if a new eſtabliſhment ſhould be made at this day, it would be, in many reſpects, conſiderably different from the preſent.

On the other hand, had all our ſovereigns after queen Mary been papiſts, and the reformation never been reſumed, a preſent biſhop of Worceſter might have ſaid that the experiment had been tried, and had not anſwered, and that what had been eſtabliſhed by the wiſdom of ages, in all the countries of Europe, it could not be ſafe to alter. Beſides, what can a chriſtian, jealous for the purity of his religion, expect from the *controlling eye of the magiſtrate*, but ſuch a modification of it, or ſomething bearing its name, as ſhould be thought to be moſt ſubſervient to his own intereſt. It does not require the underſtanding of biſhop Hurd to ſee the full force of this reply; but it may require a mind leſs faſcinated by prejudice in favour of long eſtabliſhed forms.

In one reſpect this learned prelate acknowledges* that the Engliſh reformers were "not-

* Sermons, vol. i. p. 24.

"ſufficiently

"ſufficiently enlightened," and that was with reſpect to the doctrine of *toleration*. But he ſays*, "no peculiar charge of ignorance can be brought "againſt the reformers for miſapprehending a "ſubject not only difficult in itſelf, but perplexed "with endleſs prejudices." But ſurely biſhop Hurd himſelf will not ſay, that the doctrine of *toleration* is more difficult in itſelf, or more perplexed with prejudices, than the doctrine of the *trinity*.

In another caſe, alſo, if he be at all ingenuous, he muſt acknowledge that the Engliſh reformers did not ſee quite ſo clearly as he himſelf now does. He ſays†, "the chriſtian ſyſtem has been reviled "by ſuch as have ſeen it through the falſe me-"dium of popiſh or Calviniſtic ideas." Calviniſm, therefore, according to him, is not true chriſtianity. But let any competent judge of the ſubject, read the *thirty-nine articles*, of the church of England, and ſay whether they have not a ſtrong tinge of Calviniſm.

It is not merely from ſuch a general expreſſion as that above quoted, that I conclude biſhop Hurd is no friend of Calviniſm. He directly contradicts the fundamental article of that ſyſtem when he ſays‡, that "a divine perſon," &c. "in "virtue of his all atoning death, has opened the "gates of eternal life to the whole race of mor-"tal man."

* Sermons, vol. i. p. 24. † Ib. p. 37. ‡ Ib. vol. iii. p. 63.

According to the plaineſt ſenſe of the articles of the church of England, the gates of eternal life are not open to the *whole race of mortal men*; but only to thoſe who "by the everlaſting pur-"poſe of God, before the foundations of the "world were laid, being choſen in Chriſt out of "mankind, are decreed by his council, ſecret to "us, and are delivered from curſe and damna-"tion*." It muſt be a ſtrange *latitude of interpretation* (for which his lordſhip is an advocate) that can reconcile theſe two contrary poſitions; and yet in the preface to theſe articles it is ſaid, "that they were agreed upon for avoiding diver-"ſity of opinions, and eſtabliſhing conſent touch-"ing true religion." Let Mr. Madan, Dr. Hurd, and the excellent biſhop of Carliſle, together with ſome unbelievers among the clergy, all ſubſcribers to the ſame articles, confer together, and tell us what this *conſent touching true religion* is.

What reformation can we expect in any important doctrinal articles of religion, when biſhop Hurd expreſſes himſelf ſo ſtrongly as we have ſeen, in favour of the *divinity of Chriſt, in the higheſt ſenſe of the word*; by which he muſt mean that he is fully equal, in power and glory to the Father, whom Chriſt himſelf ſtiles *his Father and our Father, his God and our God.* It was a long time, as I have ſhewn, before any chriſtians, after they contended that Chriſt was God, had any idea of his being ſo, except in ſome qualified ſenſe.

* Article xvii.

I will

I will venture to ſay that no perſon before, or at the council of Nice, would have uſed ſuch language as this of biſhop Hurd.

With reſpect to the doctrine of *atonement*, which I think I have proved to be quite a modern thing, and hardly to have been known before the reformation, biſhop Hurd ſays*, "The "ſcriptures are unintelligible, and language itſelf "has no meaning, if the *blood of the Lamb ſlain* "has not a true, direct, and proper efficacy, con-"ſidered in the literal ſenſe of *blood*, in freeing "us from the guilt of ſin, or in other words from "the puniſhment of it."

It is impoſſible, however, not to obſerve, that the papiſts uſe the ſame language in defence of the doctrine of *tranſubſtantiation*, appealing alſo to the literal ſenſe of more texts of ſcripture than one. Beſides, how is it poſſible that the *blood* of any man (and the *divinity* of Chriſt certainly had no *blood*) conſidered in a *literal ſenſe*, ſhould cleanſe from ſin. Surely there muſt be ſomething figurative in ſuch language as this; and why ſhould the figurative ſenſe end juſt where biſhop Hurd would fix it, rather than where Socinus would chooſe?

Nay, it ſhould ſeem that, according to biſhop Hurd, our ſalvation depends upon the *belief of*

* Sermons, vol. i. p. 193.

this novel doctrine of atonement. For I can ſee no other natural interpretation of what he ſays*, "They muſt place their entire hope and confi- "dence in the blood of the covenant, who would "ſhare in the bleſſings of it." If this is to be underſtood according to the literal ſenſe of the words, all the heathen world are excluded from ſalvation, as well as Socinians.

To me it appears extraordinary, that a man of biſhop Hurd's good ſenſe ſhould not be more ſtaggered than he appears to have been, at the very manner in which he himſelf deſcribes the doctrines of the *divinity of Chriſt*, and of *atonement for ſin by his death*, every ſentence, and every clauſe of a ſentence, being calculated to excite aſtoniſhment; but I ſhall only tranſcribe a part of it. After deſcribing the gradual unfolding of the ſcheme under the Jewiſh diſpenſation, he ſays, "At length Jeſus Chriſt came into the world, to "fulfil and to declare the whole will of God on "this intereſting ſubject; and from him, and "thoſe commiſſioned by him, we learn what the "wiſeſt men, and even *angels had deſired to look* "*into*, and could at moſt diſcern but imperfectly, "through the types and ſhadows of the patri- "archal and Moſaic diſpenſations."

"The great myſtery, now unveiled, was "briefly this, that God would only confer this

* Sermons, vol. i. p. 194.

"mighty

" mighty privilege at the inſtance, as it were, and " for the ſake of a tranſcendently divine perſon, " his only begotten ſon, the ſecond perſon in the " glorious trinity, as we now ſtyle him; that this " divine perſon ſhould deſcend from heaven, " ſhould become incarnate, ſhould even pour " out his blood unto death, and by that blood " ſhould waſh away the ſtain of guilt. In this " awfully ſtupendous manner, at which reaſon " ſtands aghaſt, and faith herſelf is half con- " founded, was the grace of God to man at " length manifeſted*."

The natural effect of ſuch a pauſe of aſtoniſhment as this, ſhould be a cloſe examination, whether a thing that even ſupernatural evidence can barely make credible, did ever take place; for in all caſes, the more extraordinary any *thing*, any *event*, or any *propoſition*, is, the more evidence it requires. And when we conſider the true meaning of the figurative language of ſcripture, it will be found to aſſert nothing on this ſubject at which even reaſon can ſtand aghaſt.

Our author himſelf, after enumerating† the ſtrongeſt figurative expreſſions of the ſcriptures on this ſubject, as thoſe on which the terms *redemption*, *ranſom*, *propitiation*, *ſacrifice*, *&c.* occur, cloſes the whole with this obſervation. " Now " let men uſe what art they will in torturing ſuch

* Sermons, vol. ii. p. 285, &c. † Ib. p. 288.

" expreſſions as theſe, they will hardly prevent " our ſeeing what the plain doctrine of ſcripture " is, viz. That it pleaſed God to give us eternal " life only in his Son, and in his Son only as " ſuffering and dying for us." All this I readily admit, believing as firmly as biſhop Hurd can do, that it was expedient, and neceſſary, that ſuch a perſon as Jeſus Chriſt, ſhould preach as he did, and that he ſhould die, and riſe again, or the end of the goſpel, in forming men to a happy immortality, could not have been gained. This is certainly the doctrine of the New Teſtament, but then it was far from being the doctrine of *atonement*; which I think I have ſhewn to be a very different thing from that which was taught by Chriſt and the apoſtles, and indeed to have been unknown for ſeveral centuries after Chriſt.

It is no wonder that this writer ſhould ſay*, that " no chriſtian is bound to a ſolicitous en- " quiry into the doctrinal parts of the goſpel; and " that very poſſibly his conduct is then moſt ac- " ceptable, when he looks no farther than to the " authority of the goſpel, agreeable to the known " deciſion of our Saviour himſelf, *Bleſſed is he* " *who hath not ſeen and yet hath believed.*" For certainly ſuch tenets as thoſe above cited can never be believed on any other terms. Faith in them muſt be implicit, and without inquiry. It is rather extraordinary, however, that this writer

* Sermons vol. iii. p. 52.

did

did not perceive that the ſaying which he quotes of our Saviour relates only to a *matter of fact*, of which it was not poſſible that more than a very few perſons could be eye witneſſes; whereas the things that he is contending for are *doctrines*, of which all perſons at this day are competent judges, provided they make uſe of their reaſon, and examine the ſcriptures for themſelves. But even the looking no farther than to the *authority of the goſpel* for articles of faith, may make a very *ſolicitous enquiry* abſolutely neceſſary, conſidering how much and how long, ſome articles of faith have been miſrepreſented.

In fact, if the learned prelate could fancy himſelf out of the fetters of his church's creed, he might find the very articles which he ſo zealouſly contends for among the "quibbles and "metaphyſics, which" (with a ſtrain of pleaſantry not uſual to him, and indeed rather uncommon in a ſermon) he ſays*, "the pagan philoſophers, "when they preſſed into the church, in their "haſte, forgot to leave behind them."

But however theſe doctrines came in to repeat the biſhops own words†, "the preſumptuous "deciſions of particular men, or churches, are "forwardly taken for the genuine doctrines of "chriſtianity; and theſe poſitions being not un-"frequently either wholly unintelligible, or even

* Sermons, vol. iii. p. 205. † Ib. p. 209.

" contrary to the plaineſt reaſon, the charge of " nonſenſe, or of falſehood, is thus dextrouſly " transferred to the goſpel itſelf." This very juſt, and well expreſſed obſervation, I cannot help thinking to be peculiary applicable to ſeveral articles of the creed of biſhop Hurd himſelf, as I think muſt be ſufficiently evident from the preceding hiſtory.

This writer not content with what he himſelf had advanced againſt all improvements, or alterations, in the church in which he preſides, quotes with the higheſt approbation what Mr. Burgh, in his reply to Mr. Lindſey, ſays againſt the idea of a *progreſſive religion*; viz. that " All that the " bible contains was as perſpicuous to thoſe who " firſt peruſed it, after the rejection of the papal " yoke, as it can be to us now, or as it can be to " our poſterity in the fiftieth generation*."

This is evidently a miſ-ſtating of the caſe; becauſe it is not a *progreſſive religion*, but a *progreſſive reformation* of a corrupted religion that is pleaded for. And as it cannot be denied that the corruption of chriſtianity was a gradual and progreſſive thing, can it be ſo very unnatural to expect that the reſtoration of it to its primitive purity ſhould be gradual and progreſſive alſo? If the reformation was not progreſſive, why does not this biſhop prefer the ſtate of it under John

* Sermons, vol. i. p. 244.

Huſs

Huſs and Jerom of Prague to that of Luther and Cranmer? He may ſay that they had not then completely *rejected the papal yoke.* But if by papal yoke he meant all the corruptions of chriſtianity contained in the ſyſtem of popery, and which had been enforced by the authority of the ſee of Rome, I ſay, that neither Luther nor Cranmer rejected the papal yoke; becauſe their reformations were partial.

Beſides if we make the ſentiments of the divines of that particular age which Mr. Burgh and biſhop Hurd may call the proper *æra of the reformation*, to be our ſtandard, why ſhould we adopt thoſe of Luther or Cranmer, in preference to thoſe of Socinus, or even thoſe of the Anabaptiſts of Munſter, who were all of the ſame age? I know of no reaſon but that the opinions of Luther and Cranmer had the ſanction of the *civil powers*, which thoſe of Socinus, and others of the ſame age, and who were equally well qualified to judge for themſelves, had not.

It is nothing but the *alliance* of the kingdom of Chriſt with the kingdoms of this world (an alliance which our Lord himſelf expreſsly diſclaimed) that ſupports the groſſeſt corruptions of chriſtianity; and perhaps we muſt wait for the fall of the civil powers before this moſt unnatural alliance be broken. Calamitous, no doubt, will that time be. But what convulſion in the poli-

tical

tical world ought to be a ſubject of lamentation, if it be attended with ſo deſirable an event. May the *kingdom of God*, and of Chriſt (that which I conceive to be intended in the Lord's prayer) truly and fully *come*, though all the kingdoms of the world be removed in order to make way for it!.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

Containing a Summary View of the Evidence for the primitive Chriſtians holding the Doctrine of the ſimple Humanity of Chriſt.

AS the doctrine held by the primitive church, and eſpecially by Jewiſh chriſtians, is of particular conſequence, it may give ſatisfaction to ſome of my readers, to ſee the evidence for their holding the doctrine of the ſimple humanity of Chriſt, ſtated in a more conciſe and diſtinct manner than it is done in the body of this work. I ſhall, therefore, attempt it in this place, and take the opportunity of introducing a few more circumſtances relating to it.

1. It is acknowledged by early writers of the orthodox perſuaſion, that two kinds of hereſy exiſted in the times of the apoſtles, viz. that of thoſe who held that Chriſt was *ſimply a man*, and the other that he was *man only in appearance*. Now the apoſtle John animadverts with the greateſt ſeverity upon the latter; and can it be thought probable that he ſhould paſs over the former without cenſure, if he had thought it to be an error?

2. Athanaſius

2. Athanſius is ſo far from denying this, that he endeavours to account for Chriſt being ſpoken of as a man only in ſeveral parts of the New Teſtament, and eſpecially in the book of Acts, from the apoſtles not being willing to offend the Jews (meaning the Jewiſh chriſtians) of thoſe times, and that they might bring them to the belief of the divinity of Chriſt by degrees. He adds that the Jews being in this error (which he ſtates as their believing Chriſt to be ψιλος ανθρωπος) drew the Gentiles into it alſo.

3. It is acknowledged by Euſebius and others, that the antient unitarians themſelves conſtantly aſſerted that their doctrine was the univerſal opinion of the chriſtian church till the time of Victor.

4. Hegeſippus, the firſt chriſtian hiſtorian, himſelf a Jew, enumerating the hereſies of his time, mentions ſeveral of the Gnoſtic kind, but not that of Chriſt being a mere man. He moreover ſays that, in travelling to Rome, where he arrived in the time of Anicetus, he found all the churches that he viſited held the faith which had been taught by Chriſt and the apoſtles.

5. Juſtin Martyr, who maintains the preexiſtence of Chriſt, is ſo far from calling the contrary opinion a *hereſy*, that what he ſays on the ſubject is evidently an apology for his own.

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As Hegeſippus was cotemporary with Juſtin, he muſt have heard at leaſt of the doctrine of the ſimple humanity of Chriſt, but he might not have heard much about the opinion of Juſtin, which was different from that of the Gnoſtics, though the pre-exiſtence of Chriſt was a part of both.

6. Irenæus, who wrote after Juſtin, only calls the opinion of thoſe who held that Chriſt was the ſon of Joſeph as well as of Mary a hereſy. He ſays nothing of thoſe who, believing him to be a mere man, allowed that he had no human father.

7. Thoſe whom Epiphanius calls *Alogi*, among the Gentiles, held that Chriſt was merely a man; and as they had no peculiar appellation before his time, and had no ſeparate aſſembles, it is evident they could not have been diſtinguiſhed as heretics in early times.

8. The firſt who held, and diſcuſſed, the doctrine of the divinity of Chriſt acknowledged that their opinion was exceedingly unpopular with the *unlearned* chriſtians, and that theſe latter were pious perſons, who dreaded the doctrine of the trinity, as thinking that it infringed upon that of the ſupremacy of God the Father.

9. The divinity of Chriſt was firſt advanced and urged by thoſe who had been heathen philoſophers,

loſophers, and eſpecially thoſe who were admirers of the doctrine of Plato, who held the opinion of a *ſecond God.* Auſtin ſays*, that he conſidered Chriſt as no other than a moſt excellent man, and had no ſuſpicion of the *word of God* being incarnate in him, or how "the catholic faith "differed from the error of Photinus" (the laſt of the proper unitarians whoſe name is come down to us) till he read the books of Plato; and that he was afterwards confirmed in his opinions by reading the ſcriptures. Conſtantine in his oration to the Fathers of the council of Nice†, ſpeaks with commendation of Plato; as having taught the doctrine of "a ſecond God, derived from "the ſupreme God, and ſubſervient to his will."

10. There is a pretty eaſy gradation in the progreſs of the doctrine of the divinity of Chriſt; as he was firſt thought to be a God in ſome qualified ſenſe of the word, a diſtinguiſhed emanation from the ſupreme mind, and then the *logos* or wiſdom of God perſonified; and it was not till near four hundred years after Chriſt that he was thought to be properly *equal to the Father.* Whereas, on the other hand, it is now pretended, that the apoſtles taught the doctrine of the proper divinity of Chriſt, and yet it cannot be denied that in the very times of the apoſtles, the Jewiſh church and many of the Gentiles, held the opi-

* Confeſſiones, Lib. vii. Cap. xix. &c. † Cap. ix. p. 684

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nion of his being a *mere man*. Here the tranſition is quite ſudden, without any gradation at all. This muſt naturally have given the greateſt alarm, ſuch as is now given to thoſe who are called *orthodox*, by the preſent Socinians; and yet nothing of this kind can be perceived. Beſides, it was certainly more probable that the chriſtians of thoſe times, urged as they were with the meanneſs of their maſter, ſhould incline to *add to*, rather than *take from*, his natural rank and dignity.

FINIS.

AUG 29 1940